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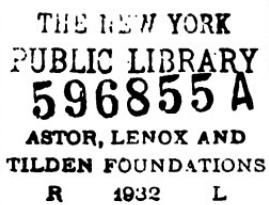
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Red-Headed Gill

CHAPTER I

M R. TREHANNA, I want to introduce you to Lady Branscombe! Lady Branscombe, here is a fellow countryman of ours, who has been through all the war in the Soudan, and I don't know where besides."

"Ah! Graf Kinski; how do you do?" and the hostess of the evening turned away, and left the two people thus presented to improve each other's acquaintance.

It was a crowded reception night at the British Embassy, for his Excellency, H.M.'s Ambassador to the Court of Vienna, was very popular, and his *salon* attractive.

The lights were brilliant, and reflected in every corner by bejeweled Hungarians. A lively waltz was going on in an adjoining room, and the sounds formed a musical background to the forcible Wiener Deutsch echoing on all sides.

Lady Branscombe, in diaphanous and effective black, created a charming contrast to the many-colored crowd.

Nothing had ever become her more than her widow's weeds, even when pruned into the narrowest borders of suggested affliction for occasions like the present; and it was a devout belief in the infallibility of her milliner which enabled her to raise her flaxen head and forget-me-not

blue eyes to the face of the man thus suddenly put before her—the man whom she had jilted for a richer lover seven years before,—and who had vanished then and there from the face of the earth, so far as she was concerned.

“O du Elizabeth! du bist mir gar so nett!” went the band; and her mind flew back in a flash to the tune that was being played by the wretched German band outside the window in a shabby little London street when last she had seen Michael Trehanna. She drew a quick breath involuntarily. She was again in her father’s little drawing-room, alone with her lover Michael; her head on his breast, listening to his eager recital of the old story, even while her hand stole to her pocket to hide within it the new diamond ring which promised her to Lord Branscombe.

Ridiculous! How could she have married a clerk in the Civil Service?

The vagrant memory was back, as swiftly as it had flown, and she was in Vienna and Michael Trehanna was standing before Lord Branscombe’s widow.

“Delighted to see you looking so well, Lady Branscombe,” he was saying in the voice she remembered so exactly. “How do you like Vienna?”

She looked up at him, and the old name, half uttered, died on her lips.

This was not her old lover, of the young enthusiastic beardless face; this was not the thin figure with the student’s stoop and the frayed coat-sleeve. No. This Trehanna was a man, bearded and brown, healthy and soldier-like. The deep-set eyes that she remembered were clear and sharp now, and not an inch of his six feet was lost by his bearing. There was no question of frayed garments or empty pockets visible about this man, who could bear comparison with any distinguished person in the crush of notabilities.

Lady Branscombe stammered and blushed in beautiful confusion, and with the sweet deprecating smile which had done so much execution in old days answered his commonplaces as lightly as might be in keeping with the subdued grief of her garments.

"Have you been dancing?" he inquired.

"Oh, no!" she said. "You know I am in mourning; and it is not so very long—I—I am a widow, Mr. Tre-hanna."

"Ah, yes; I should con—*dole* with you."

The break in his speech was quite sufficient to show his doubt as to whether *gratulate* had not been a better ending to the word.

"Ah! I have suffered a great deal since I saw you last," she sighed; "enough to atone for many things. Can you ever forgive me?" she continued, just audibly, as the crowd swayed and surged past them.

"What a question, Lady Branscombe!" he replied, in an audible and remarkably cheerful tone. "Surely you need not ask. Fair ladies have prescriptive rights to torture their victims. Does them all the good in the world, I assure you—the victims, I mean, you know. Teaches them to come up smiling every time. Ah, Dacre! is that you?"

"All that is left of me," groaned the newcomer. "How de do, Lady Branscombe. Faith! I'm nearly dead. I've twirled round one ton of human flesh in yellow satin fifty-three times, and I'd rather dodge a Fuzzy round the Pyramids at noonday than give another turn."

"Stuff, old man. You're out of training. You've gone in for the dissipations of this gay capital, and your muscle has shrunk."

"All very well for you to talk. Nobody tells you off for diplomatic service with the wives of touchy old men

in high places. Fact is, Lady Branscombe, Trehanna is the laziest beggar going when he is in town."

"And how often is that?" asked the lady, on the alert for information.

"Heaven only knows. Trehanna is like old Clootie himself for walking up and down on the face of the earth, and going to and fro to the ends thereof. By the way, there's a big shindy getting up down Servia way, Trehanna!"

"Is there?" answered that gentleman composedly.

"Yes. Reichmansdorf was holding forth about it just now. You know Baron Reichmansdorf, Lady Branscombe?"

"No," she said. "You know I have not been here very long."

"He's a useful person to know," said Trehanna; "highly ornamental and full of information—an *édition de luxe* of the Viennese Inquire Within, combined with a directory. And the Honorable Jack Dacre is another. There now, old man, haven't I done the handsome thing by you? First time you ever got a character. But I see a man over there making frantic signs to me. He'll do himself an injury if I don't go. *Au revoir*, Lady Branscombe! 'By, Jack,' and he was gone.

"You know Mr. Trehanna very well, Mr. Dacre?" asked Lady Branscombe.

"Rather!" he replied. "Went all through the Soudan with him, more or less. He was war correspondent for the *British Liar*, and he and our fellows got pretty intimate. He picked me out of a dancing party of Fuzzies with a sword-cut across my head and carried me ever so far in the blazing sun—the place all alive with shells and things. He dragged a black reptile from under Lord R.'s tent-ropes, with a knife in his teeth—ready to pink the

general. When I got hooked on to the diplomatic service here, Trehanna managed to get the special correspondence for the *Liar*; but since these little States have taken to spitting at each other round here, you never know where Trehanna is. But he's the finest fellow I know."

"You are quite enthusiastic, Mr. Dacre."

"Not a bit. There are ever so many other fellows who would say just as much of Trehanna."

"Is he married yet? It is some years since I have seen anything of—his people. I used to know them."

"Trehanna married! Not much. That's his shady side, Lady Branscombe. He does not appreciate your sex. He isn't rude, you know, but he says that they interfere with a man's work, and he can't be bothered. I suppose he never had any female folk belonging to him, and his mother died early. Jolly kind of invention a good mother, don't you think?"

"Yes. But it is quite true that female Trehannas are scarce. The family of your friend just consists of himself and the present owner of the estate, his elder brother Humphrey, who is a kind of hermit. Bad health, I believe."

"Funny thing! Trehanna never hinted that he was heir to anything. Good family, I know. Cornish, isn't it? A Tre, Pol, or Pen."

"Oh, yes," said Lady Branscombe; "very old family. But the estate is very much impoverished, I am told."

"You said you knew his people?"

"Yes, a side branch. There is an uncle, a banker in London. How hot it is getting!"

"Let me fetch you an ice; you will find it cooler in the outer room." And they moved away.

It was some days before Lady Branscombe saw Trehanna again, though she had managed to hear a good

many particulars as to his life and position in Vienna. She found that he was welcomed in houses to which she had not succeeded in getting the *entrée*.

One afternoon they passed each other in the Prater, and he lifted his hat with coldest politeness in answer to her smiles, and passed on.

An angry flush shot into her cheeks. He cared no more about her than he did for any of these beer-drinking German women. If he had only wanted revenge, it would have been easier to bear, but absolute coolness—

"But we shall see, Michael," she muttered to herself. "If I make up my mind, I think I know enough of you to bring you down a peg yet. If I want you back, you shall come. I'll remember this."

True, he might have reasons for giving her a wide berth. She had deliberately thrown him over in the old days for a richer man, listening still to his foolish plans for earning five hundred a year to marry on, while she was already pledged to marry Lord Branscombe. And he had been blind until she had opened his eyes—by letter—two days before her wedding.

She thought back with disgust on the pimpled, sandy-headed little man with purses below his eyes, and who had been so long dying of loathsome diseases. But the little sandy-haired man had been possessed of money and estates, and Michael Trehanna had neither. So she had taken the money and the land with the husband attached, and discovered in less than seven years that a husband, instead of being a polite adjunct to these possessions, was their master and hers. Then began doubts and questionings; and now when liberty to enjoy her life and her money was given her still in her youth, before bad days and a bad complexion descended upon her, she found she was hankering after the bond slave of long ago. She wanted the

old Michael Trehanna, who had been hers, body and soul, to make or to break, and more than ever now she wanted the new Trehanna, the man with the soldier's frame and instinct and the thinker's brain, and, above all, the man who had shown that he did not want her.

"Doesn't want me," she said to herself, "but in seven years he has not married. He could have found big black-haired women enough here if he wanted one for a contrast. But he doesn't want contrast. He wanted me—and he did not get me, so he has taken nobody. It's me—only me—and I've plenty now for both. Oh, what a fool he is to pretend not to see!"

So she arrayed herself delicately in fine raiment, and her flaxen hair became more than ever like a fuzzy halo around her transparent forehead and turquoise eyes, and she cultivated all those of Trehanna's friends whom she could get hold of, but Trehanna himself she could not get at—for he had vanished.

"Where is he?" said Jack Dacre, when she casually inquired as to his dear friend's whereabouts. "Oh, you don't expect to find him there weeks in the same place, do you? Why, the fellow smells a fight a month before it begins, and as soon as these little cats of Southern European States begin to spit at each other, Trehanna is on the spot measuring their claws and reproving them for bad language. There's a jolly row getting up down Servia way. By Jove! I wish they'd let a fellow off from this creaky old treadmill to snuff powder again. I'd soon find Trehanna."

About this time Lady Branscombe bethought herself of a very dear and much-neglected friend and correspondent, to whom she wrote a long and interesting letter. In the postscript she said:

"By the way, your cousin, Michael Trehanna, seems

very popular in Viennese circles. I have met him once or twice lately."

To her surprise, in less than a week a telegram was brought her from "Hester Trehanna to Lady Branscombe. Please wire Michael's address. Brother dead."

How was she to do that? In her perplexity she consulted young Dacre, who said:

"Address Trehanna, 'Hottest corner of biggest shindy—Servia.' That's probably correct, you know, but for business purposes I should advise them to apply to the London offices of the *British Liar* for the present address of their war correspondent. So Trehanna is to inherit and live at home at ease. Hum! I wonder how he'll manage it."

Then Lady Branscombe found that she had already stayed longer at Vienna than she had intended, and forthwith departed to England.

In the days of Queen Bess a certain Bevill Trehanna, of the manors of Trehanna and Carvarron on the south coast of Cornwall, had fitted out a galleon on his own account to sail the Spanish seas, and spoil the Queen's enemies generally, in which laudable intent he succeeded, very greatly to his own satisfaction and to that of his wife, Dame Gillian, a lady whose beauty and wealth had made her a great prize to her husband. She had brought him Carvarron as her dowry—a great tract of land running up from Trehanna on the sea to the bare ridges which cut the county in two; a possession poor and rugged to look on, but hiding beneath its expanse of moorland rich veins of copper ore.

It was these veins of ruddy copper which supplied the currency in the Trehanna cash-boxes. Great had been the prosperity of the family till the mines dwindled in value; fault after fault occurred in the veins, and in a

moment of extra folly, missing the annual profits from Carvarron, a spendthrift Trehanna mortgaged it.

From that time on Trehanna went down. What one generation saved the next gambled and lost. The grandfather of Michael Trehanna had done well for the estate in that he had made a rich marriage, and Michael's father had been one of three sons—Francis, George, and Sydney. Francis inherited the estate; George and Sydney were each to have a portion of their mother's money.

George went to London and took to money-making, which he did well, and there begot two children—Arthur and Hester. Sydney became a soldier, who died in India, whence his widow and child returned to his native place to claim the portion due to him under his mother's settlement; but they were completely disowned and discredited by the Squire, who had been on bad terms with Sydney.

Francis, the father of Michael and of his elder brother Humphrey, was a feeble and obstinate man who was going to make an enormous fortune by speculation and almost absolutely ruined himself. His son Humphrey, weak in health and morose in temper, succeeded him to a mountain of debt and a beautiful old place fast falling into decay.

He warned Michael off the premises, as having no claim on the wretched pittance which represented the revenues of Trehanna, and died as lonely as he had lived, with no company but that of an old aunt, his mother's sister. On his death no one knew where Michael was to be found. For ten years he had not been near Trehanna, and might be dead for all that was known there.

Verily these be the generations of the Trehannas of Trehanna, and a foolish race they had been, and a luckless.

CHAPTER II

CERTAINLY Cousin Jinny was right when she said that there was not such a seat for light and comfort in all Lanithiel parish as that in the bay-window of the old front kitchen of Penlooe Farm. And Cousin Jinny ought to know.

For twenty years at least she had gone from one house to another within a radius of ten miles, carrying her little basket, with her cap (but that only lately), her thimble, scissors, and pictures of the most modern fashions, and had cut and shaped, sewed and turned all the feminine garments which needed new fashioning, and whose owners were unable or unwilling to trust to the tender mercies of fashion in the town of Twalmouth across the harbor.

In the primitive Cornish village, where all were cousins till they were advanced by reason of maturer years to the dignity of aunt or uncle, Cousin Jinny was Cousin Jinny *par excellence* as distinguished from Little Cousin Jinny and Cousin Jinny Pascoe, and she had never felt more truly satisfied and proud of her distinguished calling than when she held up a thrice-turned black silk gown in the light of that same big window and said:

"There now, Mrs. Cardew, 'tes done, and I hope you'm pleased."

"I'm mortial pleased. You've had a deal of trouble, Cousin Jinny, so you have, but et looks every bit so good's new."

"Almost better," suggested Cousin Jinny, holding it

at arm's length, the better to admire. "It didn't have none o' that lace pun et when 'twuz new. An' 'tes wonderful how a bit o' lace sets a thing off naow—so et dew.

"And I *will* say," she continued, "that there's not another house to Lanithiel where us could ha' worked so long of a evennin', an' so easy, at this yer black as in this very window. 'Tes that lightsome and cheery."

She might well say so.

The front kitchen and the house to which it belonged were as old as the Manor House of Trehanna across the bay, and everybody knew that that had been there ever since the times of King Richard Crook-back.

The originally gray stone of which Penlooe farmhouse had been built had grown to be all colors in the lapse of time, and the structure itself of all shapes. It had settled down in the earth with a slight lean here and a bulge there, but solidly, as if it had taken root.

Besides the two old-fashioned bay-windows in front there was a huge porch, all overgrown with ivy, whose flagged paving-stones were worn hollow with time. Over the big crooked chimneys, the massive walls, and the gables of the roof the fingers of Father Time seemed to have wandered caressingly, softening the hard gray angles and weaving a carpet for the swallows and butterflies to rest on, which, though in shreds and patches, far exceeded the famous Turkey carpet which was once the wonder of Trehanna House—all brown and golden moss, woven in with purple and silver lichen, brilliant stone-crop, and hardy ferns.

At the window, where in the afternoon light sat Cousin Jinny, there had been for years civil and uncivil war between the ivy and the honeysuckle, both crowding to look in through the diamond-latticed panes at the homely sitting-room. From the right-hand upper angle the ivy

got a good view of the big open fireplace where the hearth was filled with peat or bits of sea-drift timber, and where in the oaken settle Farmer David Cardew sat in the winter evenings with his long churchwarden pipe.

But the ivy berries got too forward, and tapped so hard one night that they startled Barbara and had to be clipped back; and now the honeysuckle, taking advantage of the open casement, stretched out its long spray of budding green, and caressed the waves of Barbara's hair as she leant back on the deep chintz-covered window-seat.

"I'll carry that dress upstairs 'gen Sunday naow, Cousin Jinny, and bring you a something for to see as will make you open your eyes."

And good Dame Cardew bustled off, to return again with a package containing some mysterious object swathed in brown paper and linen.

Cousin Jinny adjusted her spectacles while Mrs. Cardew said:

"Here, Barbara, give a helping hand weth they knots like a good maid. Your fingers is defter."

Fold after fold of paper was removed, then the finest linen, and by and by Mrs. Cardew exposed to view a long roll of white silk. What it should be called, or what manner of weaving made it what it was, neither they knew nor I; but it was full of little irregular shell-shaped indentations where it caught the light, and a silvery sheen so that when shaken into folds it was like an opal silvery sea, changing, glittering, and yet white.

"Awh my!" was all that Cousin Jinny could bring out for astonishment and admiration.

"Now have ee ever seed the ekal o' that?" asked Mrs. Cardew triumphantly. "Cap'n Prance brought that for Barbara there frum his last voy'ge, and he said 'twould maybe do fur a weddin' gown. He tould up a long tale

'baout how ee cum fur to get it—haow 'twas meant for somebody that died, or was lost, I don't know, but Barbie there, she du. Tell up then, Barbie."

"Oh, mother—you know you said you weren't going to believe all the stuff Captain Prance told. And he said he didn't tell us, nor believe what was told him—entirely."

"Never mind," said Cousin Jinny. "Us isn't baound to take et all fur gospul. But I'm mortial fond of a yarn myself, more 'speshul when 'tes got to dew long weth a piece o' stuff like this yer—as I never saw the like on in all my born days. Now tell up, Barbie—du ee naow," and she took off her spectacles, and with one hand finger-ing the glistening fabric, sat down, and bent her eyes on Barbie, all agog for something fresh.

Barbara laughed.

"Well, I'll tell you what Captain Prance told us, and you can believe as much as you like. He said that he went—last voyage—to Bombay, and some other place up the coast which I don't remember, and as he had a long time to wait for the cargo, he saw a good bit more of the country than he had ever done before. He sometimes bought some small thing here or there, not so much from shops as from people who came and offered curiosities for sale.

"One day an ugly-looking man came up and accosted him in rather a lonely place. He was so forbidding-looking that Captain Prance felt inclined to get out of his way; but it seemed that he only wanted to sell something, and was very humble about it, only he hadn't got it with him, but wanted to take Captain Prance to some place where he was servant or caretaker—to see it. But the Captain would not go, and at last it was arranged that the man should come to the ship, and bring whatever ne

had on board to show. Next day he came with this silk in a queer kind of box, and he declared that nothing but the greatest misery would have brought him to part with it. The piece of silk had a name—‘Web of Light,’ or some such thing,—and was especially woven for some great personage. He would not say where it came from, but it was to form a robe at some mysterious ceremony of which he seemed afraid to speak. This ceremony, it seems, never came off; instead there was bloodshed and mourning, and the wonderful personage for whom this was intended never appeared. And then it came into this man’s hands, and after years of waiting to see if it would be claimed he determined to sell it.

“Captain Prance was rather doubtful at first; the would-be silk merchant was such an altogether wretched scarecrow, that it seemed scarcely possible that the silk was honestly come by—but the Hindu declared that he was the only survivor of a sacred race, that no creature in the world had a right to the silk but himself, and that the Captain Sahib had a right to buy it. He asked a reasonable price—not so low as to make it a suspicious transaction; and seeing what a beautiful piece of silk it really was, and so unique, Captain Prance bought it, and put it away and showed it to no one.

“But just before they were going to sail another Hindu native got hold of the Captain in the street, and said that he wanted the ‘Web of Light,’ and that it must be given up to him. Captain Prance asked what he meant, and declared that he had nothing but what was honestly come by, and did not mean to be fleeced by rogues; and the man changed his tone, and began wheedling and cringing to get the silk. He wished to buy it, but declared that the other man had had no right to sell it. Captain Prance told him to go and fetch the seller of the silk, and prove

that he had sold stolen goods—but this he would not. He did not wish to make it public, and spoke all the time in a fierce whisper. He began to persuade. What could the Light of the Universe (wasn't that flattery?)—what could the Heaven-born Presence want with a thing that was charmed, that was fit only for one for whom it was meant, and which no ordinary person could use?

"Then Captain Prance got angry, and told the man to talk sense, and that anybody could see that a piece of stuff which had never had a needle and thread in it could not fit anybody until it was made up, and that when it was made by anybody that knew the way it would fit the person it was meant for. And as for suiting ordinary persons, he did not suppose that it would, and so he had no intention of handing it over to him to make himself a pinafore of. Then the man just began to dance with excitement, and declare that it was of no use—no use to Mem Sahibs (that's Englishwomen, you know)—that it was charmed, and no cutting tool would cut and no needle would shape it except for the service of the right owner.

"'Do you mean to tell me?' said the Captain, 'that if a girl has a piece of shiny stuff like that to make a gown of, and the sense to know how, she can't make that gown?'

"'No,' said the man. 'It will not fit. It will never adorn the body of any but the right one—or her equal. And where can her equal be found? As old, as wise as my grandmother, and younger and more beautiful than my daughter.'

"'Well,' said Captain Prance, 'you fellows do beat all for lying that ever I heard. I can easily understand anybody being younger than your daughter, and I could imagine people more beautiful now that I've seen you; but it stands to reason that she must be a little younger

than her great-grandmother, though she mayn't look it. You drew the bow too far that time, my hearty—just try another.'

"Then said the man: 'Have you bought the Web of Light, and yet have you not seen on the ends of it many marks of cutting? How many women have coveted a piece of such beautiful silk and have failed to get it? Truly it is as I have said, that the silk is charmed, and will serve but one owner.'

"'All right, then,' said Captain Prance, 'you seem to have had your innings with the stuff this side of the water, and by your own account there's nobody the better of it up to this time; so we'll just try what we can do in the land of sewing-machines across the seas, and if we can't make any good out of it else we'll haul it up to the masthead for a white flag. So good-by to you,' and the man got no more out of him, and had not even had a sight of the silk, and here it is."

"Aw, well, now! I never. And es et trew now, Barbbery?" asked Cousin Jinny.

"I don't know, Cousin Jinny. The people in India must be pretty queer if it is, especially the lady who was old and young at the same time. But of course they are ignorant heathens, and believe no end of things about charms, and so on, which we know better than to give ear to."

"But, 'tes true," said Cousin Jinny, who had been examining the end of the stuff. "Here are jags and slashes in the silk. Are you going to have it made up, Barbara, and will you let me try my hand at it?"

Barbara laughed.

"If it is for a wedding dress, Cousin Jinny, hadn't you better find the bridegroom first?"

"Aw! No fear o' that—why, there's Cap'n Prance

himself, though he'm none so young, just a-waitin' fur the word. 'Tain't the chaps as is back'ard. 'Tis a lovely silk, fegs—no tew ways 'baout that, but awful jagged at the edge. Why doan't ee cut 'n a bit straight, then?"

There was a mischievous dimple in Barbara's cheek as she said:

"You straighten it, Cousin Jinny. You have the scissors."

Cousin Jinny lifted the scissors, and holding the silk to the light, began to try and cut off the edge which was so jagged; but the fabric was tougher than she thought, the threads went unexpected ways, and the light dazzled her eyes, or was it nervousness? for she dropped the "Web of Light," having only made another aimless sort of gash in it.

"Well, I never!" exclaimed Mrs. Cardew. "Won't the scissors cut?"

"I don't know," said Cousin Jinny pettishly. "It du catch the light that dazzling—but never tell me, Barbara, as you haven't tried your hand tu it."

"No, no," said Mrs. Cardew energetically. "This yer is kep' up to best-room cupboard as I've got the keys on. I don't hold with young maids a-meddlin' weth what is in the best room, but her could straighten it out, if so be her wants to."

Barbara went forwards, and taking her scissors, passed them quickly along the edge of the silk, cutting off the strip with ease.

"Well," said Cousin Jinny, "that there charm's wore out any way. Now my mind's at rest; and there's not another maid to Carnwall, let alone Lanithiel, as'll have a weddin' gown equal to Barbie."

Barbara smiled, but bent her head as though inhaling the perfume of the silk as she rolled it up.

"Such a queer smell," she murmured.

"Stop, let's see a moment," said Cousin Jinny, and by a dexterous movement she raised some of the shining folds of silk to Barbara's shoulders, arranging them so as to drape her figure in front. "There now," said she, "if that there ould heathen gentleman said there wasn't nobody living was fit fer that dress he was mistook, that's all. Eh, Mrs. Cardew?"

She glanced back at the farmer's wife from where she stood, prisoning the folds of changing sheen in her hands.

She might well speak triumphantly, for face, figure, and raiment seemed made for each other. Barbara was tall, and of a rounded erect figure, and the gleaming silk lay close to bust and shoulders, flinging reflected light on the warm white shadows of ear and neck.

The small head set well back upon a somewhat full white pillar of a throat was crowned by waving masses of bronze-red hair, very much the tint of old mahogany. Her face was short, straight in forehead and nose, and full and dimpled in cheek and mouth. The brow was at fault, too square for a woman, and the eyebrows were straight and dark, adding force to the large brown eyes, whose hazel depths, usually quiet, almost dreamy, could kindle into the fire which so often lies latent with that ruddy hair.

"Hullo! What do ee call this, thun?" said a mighty bass voice at the door. "A maid dressed up for a Lord Mayor's show, and rags and snippets for tay?"

"Oh my! if that isn't Uncle David," said Cousin Jinny, whipping off the silk in a minute and turning to roll it up with Barbara, while Mrs. Cardew busied herself energetically in clearing up the remnants of her dressmaking and setting the table for the big old-fashioned meal which in Cornish minds represents afternoon tea.

"Twill be ready in a minute, David," said she as her husband, taking out his pipe, had set himself philosophically down in the porch to wait. "We was only looking at that there stuff as Cap'en Prance brought Barbie for a wedding gown."

"Weddin' gown, eh? What do her want weth weddin' gowns? Who be her going to wed now? Come here, Barbie," he said as she came slowly down the broad old staircase in her lilac cotton gown. "Which o' them pore chaps be yew gwayen tew wear a weddin' gown fur? Real silk, tew!"

"I can't get a man to match the gown, father," said she gravely, "and the gown is too pretty to give up. I must wait, I am afraid."

"Feared you must," said the farmer with a grin and returned to his pipe, while Barbara stood in the porch looking out across the fragrant garden to the sea below—and Twalmouth across the bay.

"Been up to Passun Vaughan's to-day, Barbie?" asked the farmer presently.

"Why, we've been busy all the week, father, making old clothes into new ones, so that I haven't seen godmother for ever so long."

"Making o' old cloes into new ones, hey?"

"Yes. I think I can make a fine new bonnet out of your velvet waistcoat, father," said she, with just a stray dimple fleeting round her mouth.

"Drat the maid! Ef I catch ee a-techin' o' my Sunday weskit, I'll tell ee 'bout it. Don't you go fur tew lay a finger on un. I seed fine lady up to Porthrhyn a-lookin' at en last Sunday to church, I ded, and I shall want en one o' these days fur to go an' see Squire."

"Father David, I'm doubtful of you. It is to dazzle the eyes of the grand Porthrhyn lady that you are so anx-

ious about that waistcoat, for you know it was so tight that it split all up the back when you sneezed in the middle of the sermon. As for keeping it to see Squire Trehanna in—why, it will be mouldy before he condescends to put foot in his father's house."

"Hark to her! Dreadful knawin' you be naow, Barbie! And Squire Trehanna a-settin' daown to denner up to big house this minnut."

"What? Father! Really? Is he really come?"

"So Miss Vaughan wuz a-tellin' up."

"Well, and you never said a word till now. What is he like? When did he get here? Is he come to stay? Ah, you are laughing, father. It isn't true!"

"Haw haw!" laughed the farmer. "Here's a flurry for a maid to be in, and all about a young man!"

"Young man, indeed!" said Barbara contemptuously. "Pretty young man! Why, they did say that Squire Humphrey looked like fifty when he died, and his brother is not so very much younger."

"Squire Humphrey weren't no more ner thirty-seven. 'Twuz writ up, 'pon his coffin; and there come a sister between them tew, as died, and your Cousin Michael, as is present Squire, ain't no more nor tew-and-thirty, my maid."

"How many years is it since he was here, father? In his own home? It would seem as if he had not cared much for it."

"That worn't his fault, I reckon; no more than 'tain't your fault that yew niver set fut in the house where your father wuz born. I've hearn that Squire Humphrey gave his brother to understand pretty quick when old Squire died, as Trehanna belonged to wan person and not to tew, and he could just clear out so soon's he liked. He worn't adzackly a takin' kind o' chap, worn't Humphrey!"

"What a shame!" said Barbara, her eyes flashing. "I remember that Michael used to come over here and talk to you sometimes, and how angry I used to be because he *would* call me 'Red-headed Gill.' "

"Ay, my maid, you wuz but a weany chiel then, and couldn't set no vally on his being the one, and the only one, of the Trehannas as ever called you 'Cousin Barbie.' And though yew was so mad at en (and I mind ee a-flingin' of yer poppet at en), yet I tuk et more as bein' signs as he knawed you b'longed to 'Red-headed Gill's' fambly, as had et's first beginnings 'long weth Dame Gillian an' her red hair. And yew be so like tu her picter up to long gallery in Trehanna as two peas."

"More's the pity!" laughed Barbara. "You know, father, I could dye my hair, it's easy enough nowadays, and I should be quite a decent young woman."

"Dye that theer?" said the farmer, taking his pipe out of his mouth, and extending it in the direction of Barbara's bright head. "Why, the maid's daft! Don't let me catch you up to none o' that there foolishness naow, Barbie. I thought you'd a-knowned better."

"Well," said Barbara reflectively, "perhaps I'll leave it for a year or two. But how would you like it now if people called you 'Red-headed Davy'?"

"They casn't, fur my yead worn't never no other color nor mother's door-mat when 'twere noo. But nobody ever calls ee 'Red-head' naow, Barbie."

"That's because I'm big enough to box their ears for them if they do, father—that's all. But if I am no longer a red-head, how can I be like Dame Gillian?"

"You'm like her, my maid, no tew ways 'baout that. And if iver you comes to long gallery in Trehanna (and Lord send you mout get your right some day), just you take a looking-glass and go and stand in front of Dame Gillian's

pictur, and you'll never say again as Father Davy didn't knew."

"Bain't yew tew never comin' to tay?" cried the voice of Mrs. Cardew, and broke up the sitting.

CHAPTER III

THERE had been small need to remind Barbara that she had never entered her father's old home.

To whatever cause it might be owing, the girl treasured up in secret an intense pride in the name of Trehanna. She pictured to herself all the wonders of the ancient place, whose broad façade and pointed roof she could see from Penlooe Point, and surrounded it with the romantic glamour of the unknown, whose threshold she had never passed.

How she got her information she could scarcely tell, but she certainly showed a knowledge of local and family history which set people wondering.

It had been a matter of gravest interest to the folk of Lanithiel when Sydney Trehanna, the uncle of Michael, quarreled with his father for love of penniless Barbara Vaughan, whose brother was then just made Vicar of Lanithiel. The Squire swore horribly that no beggarly parson's brood should cross the strain of Trehanna. He had an evil tongue, and so used the lady's name that his son replied with unparliamentary language in his turn, and was promptly ejected from his father's house for it.

Bab Vaughan had been sent off by her brother out of reach of scandal and hot-headed young soldiers, and Sydney had no choice but to join his regiment, just then under orders for India, without sight or word of her. He took with him, however, the generous assurance from his father that the little matter of three thousand accruing

to her youngest son from his mother's portion was intended for dutiful offspring, and not for reprobates such as he. Which accounted, perhaps, for the fact that he never got a farthing of it. No sooner was he gone than fresh cause for scandal and reproof was provided for the village by David Cardew, a humble playmate of Sydney Trehanna's, and companion in many a harum-scarum frolic.

Now, David was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; but being a lusty, comely woman, with Penlooe Farm at her back and wooers in plenty, she presented David with a stepfather, much to his disgust. David showed scant reverence to his new relation, who therefore found it his duty to chastise his stepson. He was, however, unable to fulfil this duty, for his stepson took him by the collar and by the loosest part of his nether garment, and flung him over the nearest hedge, which unfortunately overhung the pigsty. Then David hitched down his cap from its peg, said "Good-by, mother," to his remaining parent, and went off to the nearest town to enlist for a soldier.

By what seemed to him ever afterwards stupendous good luck, he found himself by and by in the same regiment as Lieutenant Trehanna, whose orderly and faithful friend he became.

And for twelve years and more no word was heard of either of them.

Then one day David Cardew came back, bringing with him a pale, quiet figure in black, with a young baby. These, he said, were the widow and child of Sydney Trehanna, who had died of a gunshot wound in India.

But though there were letters and papers to vouch for the truth of this assertion, Squire Francis Trehanna (for Sydney's father was dead) refused to acknowledge his sister-in-law or his niece.

No law, he said, could oblige him to receive them under his roof, and he sneered in David Cardew's face when that worthy reminded him of the money still owing Sydney Trehanna or his heirs under the mother's settlement.

So Grace Trehanna and her child Barbara went home to Penlooe Farm, where David's mother, once more a widow, made them and her stalwart son heartily welcome, and never so much as alluded to that unfilial game of pitch-and-toss. And by and by Grace Trehanna married her kind protector, who loved his little stepdaughter almost as much as he did his wife.

Within a year little David Cardew was born; but in one short week more he and his mother were taken to Lanithiel Churchyard together, and only Barbie was left to console "Father David."

He was sore put to it how to bring up Mr. Sydney's daughter as a Trehanna should be, and yet keep his Barbie simple and sweet for himself, and not inclined to turn up her nose at pigs and poultry and Father David's pipe.

And here Miss Vaughan, Sydney Trehanna's old love, came to the rescue.

The fact that her old lover had given her name to his child, after so many years, lifted the weight of unrewarded faithfulness from her heart, and made her godchild, as she called Barbie, the great consolation of her life.

She had never married; for which her reverend and bachelor brother thanked Heaven every time he thought of it. And she was a very sensible woman, with a great abhorrence for provincial schools and gentility properly so called. So she made Farmer Cardew give up his little maid for a few years while she got the girl educated in Germany among a little colony of cultured English people, who mixed enough in good society to give Barbara the

training of a gentlewoman—as distinct from that of a fine lady.

Farmer David exulted over "his maid" when he got her back, and found that she was ready to be an obedient daughter to the homely country woman whom he had married in her absence, and that she had no hankerings after crochet and gentility, and could be happy in a cotton gown and a sun-bonnet.

"She was the best hand at butter," he declared, "that he had seen in all his days"; though she had rather horrified Mrs. Cardew by her irreverence for wax flowers and paper curtains.

Barbara Trehanna got a good deal out of life. She had none of the hysterical weakness of mind and body which too often attacks girls who have nothing to do but wait for marriage.

Dissipation in Lanithiel there was uncommonly little, friends and acquaintances not many; but plenty of work for a girl who delighted in housekeeping, and especially farm-housekeeping near the sea. She knew and practised all sorts of wonderful recipes for cooking and preserving, and delighted in raising the hair into bristles on the top of Father David's head by some particularly villainous "kraut," or spreading a large and comfortable smile upon his ruddy face by a home-made "cēake" on strictly Cornish principles. She knew all the gossip, old and new, in the village; all the traditions of Trehanna which existed in the neighborhood or could be found in the queer old books in which she went digging, as she said for Trehanna history.

Lately, however, she had become rather more silent and abstracted, and more interested in her books and dreams than in realities. She thought of old Trehanna till she almost seemed to remember its former grandeur,

and caused the farmer's mouth to open in wonder at all the intimate knowledge of forgotten facts which she displayed—wonder, however, which changed to wrath when she maintained obstinate theories about the ancient management of the estate, contrary to his own and unsustained by her beloved books.

Witness for instance that little affair about the bridge, which was in this wise:

Father David had come home one day in harvest hot and wrathful. (It was only a day or two after Barbara's wonderful silk had been first brought home.)

Said Farmer David, "That there Dicky Trudgeon be the crabbedest ould stick to Lanithiel," and poured forth his complaint of the steward, or rather factotum, a vice-steward non-existent at Trehanna.

It was a question of roadways through great Trehanna fields, for of late years large tracts of Trehanna corn lands were leased to the owner of Penlooe, from which they were only separated by a millstream.

But the stream effectually barred the passage to and from Penlooe, where the corn was to be stacked, and Dicky Trudgeon, refusing thoroughfare by the nearer fields, insisted on a long roundabout for the harvest carts, and roused the placable David Cardew to hot ire.

Barbara looked up from her corner in the window, and said:

"Why not rebuild the bridge across the millstream?"

"What bridge?" retorted the farmer. "Never wur no bridge nor no road 'cross millstream."

"There was a bridge once," said Barbara, looking out of the window down to the very stream, but with a puckered brow, as though trying to remember something.

"Never worn't no sech thing," said the farmer testily. That's one o' they things as I've cause to know better,

my maid. Times as I've a-bathed in that there stream,
an' my granfer afore me."

"Then I dreamed—or did I see a picture?—or—
The bridge was under a thorn-tree, and the white blossoms
fell into the water and made a white ring like foam just
below the bridge."

"Ah! dreamin' like enough."

"It was of stone, too," went on Barbara slowly, as
though struggling for the details of a fleeting picture in
her mind, "broad, too dusty for—" She stopped. Why
should high-heeled shoes and silken skirts come into
her mind?

"Well," said Mrs. Cardew, "Barbie she do beat all for
dreamin'. I hearn tell o' dreamin' fur money ta buy a
caow, but she'm better dream fur money ta buy a bridge."

"Did not Penlooe belong to Trehanna once?" asked
Barbara.

"Iss fey. But many a hundred year ha' passed sence
they ole times," said Farmer David. "Naow 'tes party
near t'other way raoun', I reckon."

The morning after this small passage-at-arms, Barbara
came up to her father, big sun-bonnet on head, and brill-
iant in smiles.

"Now, father, you're coming with me. Just five min-
utes, won't you?"

The farmer melted under this beaming apparition like
May butter in the sun.

"Where to?" said he.

She took him across the meadow to the steep bank
which overhung the stream, made him squeeze his burly
figure between the willow-trees below, and cried trium-
phant:

"Now, look there!"

She had plucked the herbage away to show some old

masonry on the side of the stream. The stones were solid and black, but still keeping enough of their position to show a strong foundation and the spring of an arch.

"There's the old thorn, father," said Barbara, a thrill of delighted exultation making her whole figure quiver, as she pointed to an ancient twisted thorn-tree on the Trehanna side of the stream, hanging partly over the water, "and here was the bridge."

"Dang my buttons—so a be!" said the farmer, stock still with astonishment.

"I searched for an hour before breakfast," said Barbara, "but it was the thorn-tree that guided me."

"But what made ee search, Barbie?" said Father David, puzzled. "How did ee know 'bout th' ould bridge fur tew begin? If so be 'twur in a buke yew might ha' showed 'en."

"I'd tell if I knew," said Barbara; "but I can't think how I came to remember about it. I suppose I must have seen a picture of it—with ladies just going across—when I was a child."

"Never wadn't no sech picter to Penlooe," said the farmer.

CHAPTER IV

IT was eight o'clock in the morning, and breakfast-time at Trehanna.

It was not laid in the big hall, as had been Trehanna custom, but in a little morning room at the side; because Miss Eliza Griffith—Michael Trehanna's aunt, suffered from what she called "frail health," which she supported with such an immense amount of Christian resignation that Michael in his younger and unregenerate days used to say it was "too much jam for the bread."

Miss Griffith feared draughts.

She sat behind the coffee-pot, from which she dispensed a thin black fluid to her nephew.

She took chocolate herself—being so frail.

Michael Trehanna lifted a tarnished silver cover from the dish before him. Two black three-cornered objects bedded in white grease met his gaze.

He took one on his plate and cut it open. It was livid blue within.

He looked at Miss Griffith, who, with a smile of chastened resignation, stirred her chocolate and ate sponge biscuits.

"Are these mutton chops, Aunt Eliza?"

"Yes, Michael. I know that you men need stronger diet than that of an invalid."

Michael looked at his strong diet. It was very strong indeed, and he had been fed upon it more or less every day since his return to his old home.

The bread was dry and unappetizing. New bread is

well known to be unwholesome. And the butter was salt and oily.

He tried the mixture in his cup—and found it very much worse than the other things.

Then he said, "Who cooks these things, Aunt Eliza?"

"Old Mary Trudgeon, my dear. You know that poor Trehanna can ill support a cook just now."

"Then I'll cook for myself. If I haven't learned anything else in my wanderings over the face of the earth, I can make coffee," and with no more ado he rose and made for the kitchen.

Aunt Eliza—affectionately mourning over her nephew's evident love for the flesh-pots of this world—finished her chocolate while it was hot, and betook herself with many sighs and shakes of the head to the same place.

A strange sight met her gaze.

Dicky Trudgeon and his wife Mary, or "Meory" as she was generally called, had turned a smoking mess of fried potatoes out upon a dish, and were evidently just about to attack them when the master of the house had appeared.

At the sight and smell of the well-remembered Cornish dish Trehanna shouted:

"Ah, ha! Caught you, have I? Fried potatoes for you, Dicky, and diseased cinders for me! Hand over those potatoes—you may have the chops," and Trehanna seized the mighty dish and was about to make off with it, when his eye fell on a burly figure at the kitchen door.

"Ah, Uncle David Cardew! How are you? I'm late, it seems, for you are more punctual than I; but you see, I am in search of a breakfast. Come along and have some potatoes."

"Let me carry the dish, Squire," said Farmer David.

"Eh—by Jove! I forgot the coffee. Here! You keep

your eye on the potatoes, Uncle David, while I make the coffee. Now, Meory, where's the coffee? Got a bag? No? Well, wait till I get a new sock."

He was back again in a moment with a new pair of socks in his hand, and hanging up one, proceeded to fill the toe with coffee powder, and pour boiling water into it, and through it to a jug beneath.

The farmer laughed.

"Lor' bless ee, Squire, many's the time I've a-den that thear fur Cap'n Sydney. But you beant a soldier, be ee naow?"

"Next thing to it, farmer. War correspondent. Saw all the fun, and came away when it was over."

"Eh, sure naow, be yew wan o' they chaps? Many's the yarns, an' lies, tew, as us ha' told up long with they chaps cross camp-fire of a evenin'. But these yer tatties wants another turn o' the pan, Squire. They'm could, not brown 'nuff. Here, Meory, gi' us the fryin'-pan."

The two Trudgeons, open-eyed and -mouthed, speechless with indignation at this high-handed invasion of their rights and privacy, could only look dumbly at Miss Eliza Griffith, who, clothed with sad resignation as with a garment, stood, with drooped eyelids and downturned corners to her mouth, in the doorway.

"If you had told me before, Michael, that you preferred your coffee boiled in your stockings, we might have suited your taste," she said acidly.

"Swansdown cotton, or flannel bags are best," said Michael imperturbably. "I only take to camp customs when hunger drives. Come and taste the coffee, Aunt Eliza, with Mr. Cardew and me."

"I am afraid I must decline," said Aunt Eliza. "Strong coffee, especially made in this way, would not suit me."

And with pursed-up lips and expanded nostrils she

watched the two men with their respective burdens enter the morning room, and it was not till the door was closed that she realized that Farmer Cardew had thus got the ear of the Squire without her restraining presence.

Now, Miss Eliza Griffith had been mistress and purse-keeper for the last dozen years at Trehanna.

Poor Humphrey, between asthma and the morphia habit, had grown to be but a puppet in her hands. She made desperate efforts to convert him; for she belonged to the most impeccable order of Plymouth Brethren, and she had a little balance growing in the St. Austell Bank, which might be very seriously stunted if Trehanna purse-strings passed into other hands.

The lawyers received the larger rents, but there was a considerable margin of little pickings which she and Dicky Trudgeon financed between them.

Now David Cardew was a very sharp thorn in her side. He was a large holder of Trehanna land, and all his agricultural instincts revolted within him at the mingled neglect and waste and pinching false economy which surrounded his own well-kept fields. A word of advice or warning from him to Dicky Trudgeon always gave offense. So roofs of stable and barn fell in for want of timely repair, gates fell off and rotted, trees crashed down and lay untouched, while valuable timber decayed, and young seedlings perished for want of care.

Cottagers on the estate extended their gardens and paddocks, and paid extra tithes to Dicky. Poachers sent to the same quarter, while salmon and game went off in big hampers for the next town on the line, and Dicky had an old blue stocking in a cupboard behind his bed-head which was heavy to the feel, and, as we have hinted before, penniless Miss Griffith, descendant of the ancient royal house of Wales—who had lost all her money in

speculation some twenty years before,—had now a little book in which she studied arithmetic and calculated percentages! A little book, issued by the Cornish bank in St. Austell.

The return of Michael Trehanna, six weeks after his brother was laid in his grave, was a surprise to Aunt Eliza.

Her joy at the sight of the new owner of Trehanna was chastened by the reflection that an active inquiry into the condition of the estate might induce changes. Michael, she was sure, had no money; and how sad it would be for a young man, in the midst of his career of usefulness to his native land, to fling up all hopes of future prosperity in order to vegetate in a ruin as she had done so long and so uncomplainingly. (She was almost moved to tears at the thought of her own martyrdom.) It would be better that her nephew should see Trehanna's full poverty, so as to have no illusions about "coming into his property."

So the whole house, with the exception of three or four rooms, was shut up: for what hands could open and clean long suites of disused apartments? Broken windows and leakages in the roof played their part; and to gloom, dirt, and discomfort were added scanty, badly-cooked food and overwhelming resignation. Aunt Eliza hoped continually to her dear Michael that he would be content with the sorry fare, which was all she could provide. She had subsisted for twelve years on such homely food as scarcely a laborer would eat. But what was she? What are we all but poor worms?

Meanwhile, David Cardew and the Squire talked of leases, of roads and fences, over the cold vestiges of Michael's breakfast.

The overgrown ivy in the window obscured the light on the papers before them.

"How dark this room is!" said the Squire.

"Ay, aye," said the farmer. "Things du grow mortal fast when they'm not wanted. Barbara was a-sayin' t'other day, 'If Dicky Trudgeon don't get a new master soon there won't be no windows to Trehanna.' Her see'th Trehanna house from out o' her windy."

"Oh, yes—by the bye, I never asked after Cousin Barbara. Is she flourishing?"

A full flush of delight lit up the farmer's face.

"Thank ee, Squire. She'm hearty. And what a girt maid 'tes, tu be shewer. Bates all the maids to Lanithiel fur bigness."

A vision of a hop-pole surmounted by a red mop may have flashed before Michael's eyes, for he laughed as he said:

"I shall have to mind how I call her 'Red-headed Gill' now. All respect to her inches. Is she as big as you, Uncle David?"

A cloud crossed Uncle David's face.

"Na, na! Her 'athn't got no call fur to be as big's me, Squire. You baint a-callin' o' she Cousin Barbara along o' callin' me Uncle David, be you now? You du knew fine as she baint no Cardew?"

"Of course I do, though it might be better for her if she were. I know she's a Trehanna, well enough. Little good it has done her though, I expect."

The farmer leaned forward and held out his hand.

"Squire Michael, here's thankin' of ee hearty for them words, as you knaws her fur a Trehanna. Sence Cap'en Sydney died, weth's head pun my knee, there hathn't been never a Trehanna to hould out a hand to his own little maid, nor her mother afore her, egectin' 'twur you when you'd a-come running raound to Penlooe—a boy."

"I don't know why," said the Squire carelessly. "It

is no such tremendous advantage to be a Trehanna nowadays. I should not have thought she cared much about it."

"Eh! Barbara's a Trehanna, Squire—and blood's thicker nor watter; and though her don't say much about it, nother, her've a felt it cruel, as none of her father's kin ever spoke a kind word to her. And all the years of the life of her, here to Penlooe 'athin sight o' her father's house, that her niver put foot 'pon Trehanna threshold. Her couldn't help feeling ov it."

"Poor girl—I'm very sorry, Uncle David, if she felt it so much. I never rightly understood why she did not come about the place in my father's time."

"Ah, I reckon 'twur all about a bit o' money, Squire, an' when that cometh atween brothers 'tes wus nur if they wuz strangers, seem'th to me. Ole Squire Humphrey, as waz your granfer, Squire, he wuz bound fur tu give three thousand pound, so I've yeared, to his tew youngest sons—ache o' mun. Mr. Harthur, he got hez—an' off to Lunnon. Mr. Sydney—he didn't get noan, all along of a flummux 'bout a wumnum—an' he got off to Injy. This yer money, so I've year tell, was his mother's, as was a rich wumnum to her awn right. A St. Leger—she wur. And Mr. Sydney he niver got his share. When he wur a lyin' 'pon the bare earth o' they wisht ould Khusru hills, the day he got hes death, an' I wur a-tryin' fur tu get summut across his lips, he says: 'Davy, old friend, take 'em home to Trehanna, Grace an' the babby. My father must give them that three thousand. Don't leave them here.' And I promust, Squire, I promust, so 'elp me God, to do the best I knew'd how."

"And I am sure you have been faithful to your word, Uncle David," said Michael gravely.

"Well now, Squire, 'tes my duty for to ask ee to give your cousin Barbara her rights and the money as is due to her. Your father, he never gave one farden."

"But if you had the certainty of the money being due, why did you not claim it at law?"

"That's what had ought to ha bin done, Squire; but Mrs. Trehanna as was then, her was mortal feared o' lawyers, and her kept a-putting of ut off—till when her was wed 'long weth me, her said there warn't no need fur to go to law 'long weth her chiel's awn uncle. Her'd rayther bring Barbie up simple, so her said, fur 'twas then as comed awl that thear trouble 'pon Squire Trehanna, when the banks wuz scat, and he lost 'bout all he cud lose. But old Squire, he wouldn't never so much as look 'pon the feace of hes brother's wife, nor her chiel nother."

"A bad business!" said Squire Michael drearily.

"'Tes so—'tes. But now lookee here, Squire Michael, ef so be as you'm minded fur tu du right by yer awn kin—Trehanna flesh and blood—maybe you could see they lawyer chaps, and tell 'long with they a bit, and find out what es fitty fur Barbara fur to get. I be bound to do my duty by the maid, now you see that, don't ee, Squire?"

"Yes," said the Squire mechanically, his eyes fixed on the blue line of sea visible through the ivy-wreathed window. "Yes, yes, I see."

He rose abruptly, and began pacing the floor.

"I see," he murmured, "one more debt, if this stands in law. The concern was all but swamped already, and now it must go under."

He stood still before the window. Across the bay lay Penlooe Farm, a picture of quiet, prosperous beauty, while splendid Trehanna was fast falling into ruin.

He looked round at the farmer, and a bitter smile touched his lips.

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new," he said to himself. And then aloud: "I'll do my best, Mr. Cardew, to pay what is rightly due. I have to go over things thoroughly with Mr. Boyle this week, and perhaps the sale of the old place will bring enough to pay its own debts, and leave my hands clean. More, it will scarcely do."

The farmer's jaw dropped.

"Sell Trehanna?" he ejaculated presently in blank amazement.

Michael nodded.

"Yes, sell Trehanna."

"Lord bless ee, Squire, don't ee go fur to dew that thear."

"Man," said Michael, turning fiercely upon him, "do you think I'd fling up the old place for fun? Do you think a man would put his birthright up to auction unless the very devil of necessity drove him to it? But my father left it deep in debt with nothing to keep it up. Carvarron mortgage— But what's the use of talking? Needs must when the devil drives—so there's an end."

He sat down and drummed impatiently with his fingers on the table.

"Ay, aye," said the farmer absently, as though waiting to grasp the new idea which could not accommodate itself in his brain.

"Then, if there's nothing more, Farmer David," began the Squire, whose patience was evidently short, and who was unwilling to discuss his own affairs with all and sundry.

The farmer stood up awkwardly and shambled across to the chair on which he had laid his hat.

Trehanna rose, as though to leave the room with him.

"It baint no good, Squire," said Cardew, stopping, and turning suddenly upon his host: "I axes pard'n,

but I can't go 'way like this yer. Truth 'tes, Squire Michael, I'd ha' bit my tongue out 'bout that there bit o' money rayther'n put you to worrit when you'm worried a'ready."

"All right, all right, Uncle David," said Michael kindly. "No harm done. Bound to come some time, you know."

"No 'twarn't, no 'twarn't, Squire; and Barbie'll be fit to snap me nawse off if she du knew what I've a bin an' said. 'Twuz fur she as I did et, but agen her will."

"Well, I won't tell her it was you, man. It's only the last straw after all. The camel's back was nearly broken before."

"Naw, naw, Squire. Now, don't be vexed 'long weth Uncle Davy, but set down and tell fur a minute, for I've a got summut as I wants fur to say, cruel hard—ef I didn't knew that you'm wantin' to get shet o' me."

"Not at all. Why, sit down, man. One would think I was an awful fierce kind of customer, Uncle David, instead of a bankrupt Trehanna."

"Bankrupt be durned! Squire Michael. *Excuse me.* There baint no call fur you to be bankrupt, nor nothin' like et. Now, you might think as I don't knew what I be talkin' of, but I baint's big a fule's I looks, and I sees a mort o' things as goes on to Trehanna as never cometh to Lawyer Boyle's ears, nor afore no Squire's eyes. More'n half Trehanna corn and pasture land's leased to Penlooe and good money paid fer et. Debts there be, as I knaws, for I've a got that there mortgage up to Treeby, as is a big wan and more tew, but there be money a-comin' in, Squire, reg'lar, and a sight more money as could come in if so be that iver a Trehanna goed awver the pleace hisself, fur to see what's a-goin' to rack and ruin, and what would bring in many a pound a year if 'twuz looked tu, vitty."

"Well, you'd better buy the place yourself, Uncle Davy."

"Not so long's there's a Trehanna of the ould stock fur to awn it, Squire. I don't hold weth folk as settin' their selfs down in other folks' nestès coockoo-like. But I've had a dale to do weth Trehanna all my born days, and I've a-held a muzzle 'pon my mouth when I'd a given a year's harvest fur to be able to spake out plain. What I wants to say's this yer. Ef so be's you, Squire Michael, kin make up your mind fur to stick to the ould place and worry through all them blockages as is stuck up a purpose fur tu frighten ee out o' here, Davy Cardew's the man as would help ee honest, for the love of them as is dead and gone. Do ee see Penlooe, Squire, from where you be? Well, 'tes Cardews 'as bin there 'bout so long as there's been Trehannas to Trehanna, and if Cardews couldn't tackle a bit o' land Penlooe wouldn't be prosperin' like as 'tes, and I tell ee true, fur I *knew* Trehanna can pay if 'tes handled vitty."

"Ay, farmer, maybe, in good hands. But I never was taught anything about managing land. I was not the heir, you know, and I'm just a fool at it."

"Like enough! But if so be as you was chock-full o' book-larnin' and hadn't a got no gumption, you wouldn't ha' made yer own coffee this mornin'. Ef you can learn to use yer own gumption, nateral, you can tarn it on to whativer's vitty, farmerin' or sodgerin'."

"Well, Trehanna ought to pay, I know, but there's Carvarron behind it. Carvarron copper brought in a tidy sum in former days, and lately Trehanna money has gone to keep Carvarron workings open, and next year it will be all up with Carvarron, for the mortgage expires, and they won't renew."

"Ay, nex' year, Squire. Nex' year'll give time to

turn raoun'. Ef yew be the man fur to fight fur yer awn pleasure, I be the man fur to help ee, honest. Ask Passun Vaughan 'bout things now, Squire. He be mortal quiet like, but he'm mortal sharp. You ax he, Squire."

"I think I'd as soon trust your judgment in this kind of thing, Farmer David."

"Wall now. Ef yew be so minded, will ee come an' take a turn raound they fields, and up to woods, and I can shaw ee straight out what I du mean."

So they went off together, much to the anxiety and discomfort of Miss Griffith.

CHAPTER V

OME three or four miles from Trehanna, as the crow flies, was Porthrbyn, the small country seat of an impecunious branch of the Fortesques; and, as the owners of it found Boulogne a more salubrious climate (for the consumption of the purse, which had become chronic in the family) than Porthrbyn, they let the latter whenever they got a good paying tenant.

This summer it had been taken by a very charming widow, Laura, Lady Branscombe, who came to hide her recent sorrow in this Cornish seclusion, far from the madding crowd.

She was the identical "fine lady, up at Porthrbyn," who had been so interested in Farmer Cardew's velvet waistcoat, according to his account to Barbara.

Lady Branscombe's affliction and longing for seclusion had evidently reached the mitigated stage, and, though the society of Miss Gunn, her paid factotum and companion, so constantly jarred upon her weak nerves that the two ladies rarely met more than once a day, she was expecting visitors.

These visitors, however, were old friends. At least, one of them had been her schoolfellow, and the other boasted just as much intimacy as a schoolfellow's brother may be supposed to enjoy, who is brought face to face with his sister's friend once or twice in the season.

It is astonishing how, in grief, the mind flies back for consolation to the innocent loves and friendships of the

past; and Lady Branscombe, in her widowed condition, longed for the sympathy of her old school friend, Hester Trehanna. She would have crossed the ferry to Twalmouth to meet them, but that the weather was altogether contrary and unpropitious.

The rain, it rained; and the winds, they blew.

And the fair widow had nothing to do but, as Miss Gunn put it, to "ramp up and down the drawing-room and stare at herself in the looking-glass."

But Miss Gunn was unsympathetic. She had never had a husband, so she could not lose him, nor gain compensation, if any such were required, in this case—in a widow's cap.

Of course the relict had suffered a great deal, there was no denying that, for poor, dear Thomas's temper . . .

But perhaps there never was a face so made for a widow's cap as hers.

That was a thing to be remembered, if ever she could possibly be induced to marry again. Meanwhile a great splashing of horses' feet in the pools before the front door announced the arrival of the visitors, and she was soon welcoming her dearest Hester with effusion.

"So kind of you to come with her, Mr. Trehanna. I was afraid your courage would ooze out when it came to leaving London, just before the season, for the backwoods of Cornwall."

"When the backwoods of Cornwall contain Lady Branscombe, it would take more courage to remain in London, don't you know?"

"Dear me, how flattering! Even this awful weather hasn't taken the gloss off your politeness. But, really, what a horrid day you have had! Has it rained like this all the way?"

"Every scrap," said Hester; "and I expect it is raining

water mixed with dust and ashes in London, and Bristol, and Exeter, and all the way down now, just as it did when we passed."

"Well, come in, you poor things, and rest and get a cup of tea. There is more than an hour to dinner yet."

The drawing-room looked very inviting after a long day spent in dirty railway carriages.

A bright little fire was sparkling on the hearth, in spite of the calendar, and it was a welcome sight in the damp, cold twilight.

For the backwoods of Cornwall, the pretty silver tea service and appetizing choice of edibles was very creditable.

Arthur Trehanna, dandy, gourmet, and man of business, felt rather more reassured than he had done when he made his pretty speech, and took the really good tea handed him by his hostess with his sweetest smile.

"How nice and clean it all looks," said Hester. "I feel as if we shall make grimy marks on your chairs, Laura, for the smoke came into the railway carriage all the time—to get out of the wet, I suppose."

"Poor things!" said Lady Branscombe sweetly. "Try one of these cakes, dear. Did it rain as you crossed the ferry?"

"No, thank Heaven!" said Arthur Trehanna; "that is the only thing in the way of aggravation that the weather did not do. It held up till we got this side. We saw a funny old house among trees, on the headland, and wondered if it was Trehanna."

"Oh, dear no!" said Lady Branscombe. "Trehanna is along the bay the other side of the creek. You can see some of the trees from here, but the big front and roof are visible from the ferry."

"Well, the clouds covered it, I suppose," said Hester.

"What a funny thing that you should discover Trehanna near here, after you had taken the place!"

"Yes; and I am so glad for your sake, dear. Who knows if I should have got a visit from you if it had not been for that? But how strange that you should never have been in Cornwall before!"

"Awful out-of-the-way place, you know," said Arthur; "and my respected pater was a younger son, so he got the portion that fell to him and walked away, and never walked back."

"But why not, I wonder?" pursued his hostess. "It seems such an interesting old place, and belonging to the family, too, for so many generations."

"We'll go and have a look at it," said Arthur composedly, with a knowing little smile hidden beneath a carefully-trained mustache. "Haven't you been over the place yet, Lady Branscombe?"

"Oh, dear no! Nobody gets in, I believe. It is guarded by dragons. There is an old lady, some Trehanna relative, living in the house, and an old caretaker and his wife look after the padlocks on the gates of the grounds, I am told. People about here are not in love with any of them."

"So funny that you know more about Trehanna than we do, isn't it?" said Hester. "But how came you to pitch your tent such a long way off, dear? Branscombe Priory is such a lovely place; don't you like it?"

"Yes, oh—of course," sighed Lady Branscombe; "but everything there reminds me *so* of what I have lost that I could not bear it. I had to go somewhere, you know. The Riviera was all very well for the winter, but I felt a longing to visit those places where we were to have gone together; and the south of Cornwall was so especially recommended for its mildness."

"Oh, I see," said Hester. "And so you knew all about Porthrbyn long ago?"

"Yes, dear, of course. You know, I really seem to be nearer my poor darling when I am in the place he so much wished to see."

Hester tried to look sympathetic and to murmur something of consolation, which she knew was not needed.

"So Trehanna is still shut up?" said Arthur. "No sign of Michael yet?"

"You would surely know first if he had returned," said Lady Branscombe. "Hadn't the lawyers applied to you for the missing heir?"

"Well, he was still missing the last I heard of it," said Arthur; "but I think he is heir to a plentiful lack of the needful, and knows it, and is in no hurry to turn up."

Alone together in the drawing-room with his sister for a few minutes before dinner, Arthur said abruptly:

"Look here, Hess. Do you believe that rot about the dear, departed Thomas wanting to come to this place? She'd need a hotter climate than the south coast of Cornwall to get near him now, eh?"

"Don't be profane. Don't you think it's very sweet to hear such pretty sentiments?"

"Uncommonly sweet; awful lies. But what is her little game? It is not for nothing that she has come all this way to sit before Trehanna front door, eh?"

"Of course not; but Laura can be awfully sly. Do you remember how she fooled Michael, and all of us, up to two days of her marrying her lovely Thomas?"

"Hideous little beast he was, too. Think she wants to whistle Michael back, or is she set on buying landed estate?"

"I don't know; perhaps both. Anyhow, I knew that she got hold of a house and estate agent in London to

find a summer residence, before she came here. Mary Hemming saw her coming out as she went in, and said she wondered how Laura Branscombe hadn't got places enough to live in."

"Maybe she wants to invest some of the departed Thomas's surplus coin, and hearing how deeply dipped Trehanna estate is, thinks she may get it for an old song."

"Perhaps; you know, Michael always used to tell her no end about the place. But I think it's Michael she wants."

"Oh, you do? Well, she's improved, you know, since the days she was Laura Carroll, and went in for skimpy simplicity and S.B. hats. Perhaps Michael may think so too, if he ever turns up—which seems doubtful."

Now Arthur Trehanna had been instructed by his father to see if Trehanna estate was likely to come into the market. For if the thing were possible the family acres might be bought back by the younger branch of the family, and the London banker become Trehanna of Trehanna, as his father had been.

After a remarkably good dinner, and a sip of curaçoa with his coffee, it occurred to Arthur Trehanna that if the fair little lady before him, with the flushed, rosy cheeks and smiling eyes, should feel inclined to buy Trehanna estate, and with it a Trehanna husband, it would save everybody a good deal of trouble if he were that man.

He had not cared much about Laura Carroll in the old days; thought her rather insipid, in fact. But marriage, even with such a worn-out roué as Thomas Branscombe, had evidently improved her. She had sense enough to keep a most excellent cook, whatever she paid him. Of course, she said she had kept him on, because her dearest lost one had been so dependent upon his skill that she felt a duty to an old servant. And the wines and liqueurs

were from the cellars of the departed Thomas also; but Lady Branscombe evidently understood them, and neither tried to poison her guests nor herself with inferior vintages. In fact, she seemed quite to appreciate a good glass of wine. And Arthur Trehanna reflected that a rich young widow would suit him exactly. She was pretty, too, with the beauty of skin and coloring enhanced by a clever dressmaker, which appealed to his senses, and made him quite willing to pardon her ostentatious grief for her Thomas.

Got to tell lies for decency's sake, I suppose, he thought; just as well to do it properly.

It was in the afternoon of the second day after the arrival of her guests, that the fair widow came down the road from Porthrbyn with Arthur Trehanna at her side.

They had walked to where the road branched to Penlooe Point on one side and up a steep, tortuous road to Trehanna on the other, and now looked down towards the beach at the back of Penlooe Farm, and thence across the little bay to the landing-place and the delicious shade under the oaks of Trehanna.

"How delightfully cool it looks over there!" said the lady dolefully. "And to think that this horrid, dusty road winds for a mile uphill, all round those fields, before you can get to the lodge gates."

"Isn't there any way across these lower fields and the stream?" asked Arthur.

"No; didn't you hear them say the footpath was stopped up?"

"Horrid sell! I suppose we can't get a vehicle of any kind?"

"We might send back for the carriage if there was anybody to send. I had no idea it was so far."

"No—Oh, I say, there's a boat down there on the beach with a woman in it, mending nets I expect. We'll get her to row us across to the Trehanna landing-place."

"Capital! Yes, do. You ask her, will you, Mr. Trehanna?"

"Call me Arthur, and I'm off," said he, with one foot already forward.

"Well, Arthur. Do go"; and she smiled coquettishly at him as she settled herself on a stile to wait.

It was so hot that she had mixed a good deal of white with the garb of sorrow. In the country one may relax a point or two in concession to one's surroundings.

Arthur Trehanna struggled along a narrow path between the hawthorn hedge and the young wheat towards a steep bank, then over slippery boulders, sand and shingle, to where, rocking up and down in a little boat, was a woman whose back was turned to him, but whose loose cotton dress and big sun-bonnet with flapping curtain told him plainly to what class she belonged.

"Hoy! I say! Hey!" shouted Arthur, just above the boat.

The bonnet turned, but as it was tilted far over on the head, the chin only of the face within was visible.

"Is that your boat?" asked Arthur.

The bonnet nodded, and answered something undistinguishable.

"Look here. I want you to take us across to Trehanna. A lady upon the stile there; you can see her?"

The bonnet appeared doubtful.

"What do you say? Private? Oh, private grounds. That's all right. No one can object, for I'm one of the family. I'll pay you well, you know. My name's Trehanna. I'll go and fetch the lady."

And he was off again; but Laura, seeing him beckoning,

started to meet him, and in a few minutes the two appeared on the big rock to which the boat was fastened.

The girl rose, a tall, powerful figure, and with the boat-hook held the little bark steady while Arthur helped his companion in and put her in the stern of the boat.

Then, however, the mouth below the expanse of green and white cotton bonnet spoke.

"Can you steer?" it said.

"Oh yes. Where are the lines? Oh, there they are. Now then, my girl, go ahead."

The girl sat down to her oars, and they saw that the loose bodice was fastened at the neck with a broad white muslin kerchief, loosely knotted, which just allowed the outline of a throat to be visible, which was remarkably white for such a common person. She bent her head at her oars so much that, though a pretty nose and mouth were visible, all the upper part of her face was hidden.

The girl gave one or two strokes.

"You are pretty heavy, both of you," she said presently. "I don't know if I can manage it by myself."

"Oh, just bend your back at it," said Arthur lightly. "I can row, but it's scarcely worth while to take off one's coat for a bit like this. A big girl like you should take us over in a jiffy."

The big girl tried again, and this time with better effect, or they got out of the current setting inshore, for they were soon heading for the tiny pier, every stroke of the oars on the quiet water bringing them nearer.

"How clear the water is: I can see to the bottom. Look at those white stones. And it is so clean: not like the Twalmouth mud." And Lady Branscombe took off her glove and dropped her white, much-beringed hand in the water.

"It is a jolly little bay," said Arthur. "I remember

Michael used to bore us extensively about it. Timber isn't bad about the place either. Ought to be worth something."

His glance fell on the white throat of the rower as she turned her head to see for the landing-steps.

"How white that girl's skin is!" he remarked *sotto voce* to his companion.

"Now Lady Branscombe, like many dazzling blondes, was less fair of neck and arm than the face would warrant.

"Elles ne mangent rien que du poisson," she replied contemptuously. "C'est cela qui les rend si blanches; mais alors gare à l'odeur. Ne vous approchez pas de trop près. Elles respirent même le poisson."

"On aura soin de vous eviter, Madame," said the pretty mouth below the bonnet, as the owner cleverly drew the little boat alongside of a small pier, holding it again by the boat-hook so that the passengers needed only to step ashore without nearing her.

"Passez, s'il vous plait."

Lady Branscombe was so astounded that she forgot to rise, and her companion took her hand to help her.

"You can speak French?" she said, as she stood at last upon her feet. "How on earth did you learn?"

"Like other people, I suppose," was the reply.

Arthur Trehanna drew Lady Branscombe up the little jetty, and, turning, said more respectfully than at first:

"How much do we owe you?"

"Thanks and civility," was the answer. "Nothing more."

"Oh, I say, you know. Don't bear malice, there's a good girl. What's your name?"

"My name?" said the tall figure, boat-hook in hand, just prepared to shoot off again into the bay. "Barbara Trehanna."

"Trehanna!" ejaculated Lady Branscombe.

"What?" said Arthur.

"Ah, how do you do, Cousin Barbara?" said another voice as a gentleman emerged from the shade of a big tree behind, and, walking up to her, held out his hand. "You have not forgotten your cousin Michael?"

Barbara gave him her hand, and the mouth, which had spoken so disdainfully to the others, smiled shyly, disclosing two rows of even, milky-white teeth, at which Arthur stared foolishly.

"No, not forgotten," she said quietly.

"Why, how on earth did you get here, Michael?" exclaimed Arthur.

"Train mostly," said Michael briefly; "though I should more likely ask you that. How do you do, Lady Branscombe? Barbara, allow me to introduce your cousin, Arthur Trehanna. Arthur, this is Uncle Sydney's daughter."

Arthur came forward to shake hands, saying:

"Give you my word, I didn't know Uncle Sydney had a daughter. You must allow me to apologize, Miss—ah—Cousin Barbara—for my mistake."

"There is no need," replied Barbara, bowing quietly, without noticing his movement to extend his hand. "Good-by!". And, without waiting, the boat-hook gave such an energetic push that in a moment several feet of water lay between them.

Then Arthur wondered how he could have been so blind as to imagine that easy, graceful figure to belong to a fishergirl.

"Of all the rum goes!" he muttered as he watched her movements.

Laying down the boat-hook, she had seated herself and began to paddle with one oar against the current;

and, slowly moving with the boat, she turned her back, and they saw, rolling down from beneath the deep flap of her bonnet, a thick, burnished, shining rope of hair, which passed her waist and hung gleaming below the rower's bench.

"By George!" ejaculated Arthur. "Look at that hair, Michael. Beats the advertisements, eh?"

"Proof of her ancestry," remarked Michael; "Red-headed Gillian."

"That's not red," retorted Arthur.

"Then carrots are blue," said Lady Branscombe, smiling sweetly at Michael's last remark; for it showed at least, in spite of his remarkable politeness to this fisher-girl cousin, that he was not a slave to her attractions.

"We must really apologize to you, Mr. Trehanna, for our intrusion," continued she, turning to Michael, "but we didn't know that you were at home, and I *did* so want to see the dear old place at last."

"I should be very sorry if my presence put any impediment in your way, Lady Branscombe," replied the Squire, with as much stately politeness as if he had been his own grandfather.

"Well, old chap," said Arthur, coming up to the other side of him, "how long have you been back? Do you know it's six or seven years since any of us set eyes on you."

"Dare say it is," said Michael calmly. "But how did you come from Penlooe? I was sitting here, and wondering who the mischief had the cheek to land on private grounds, till you got half across and I saw your faces."

"We don't come from Penlooe—from Porthrhyn."

"Are you staying with the Fortescues, then?"

"No," said Lady Branscombe; "I have taken Porth-

rhyn for the summer, and Hester and—Mr. Trehanna are staying with me just now."

"Oh, indeed! And how did you manage to get hold of Barbara?"

"I am afraid I put my foot into it with Barbara, in more senses than one. But I didn't know the girl from Adam—or Eve: saw her sitting in her boat and took her for some fisherman's daughter, and told her to take us over."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Michael. "She won't take you back. She didn't seem delighted with you, somehow, by the last few words I heard."

"What, the French?" asked Arthur. "Oh, I don't go in for languages and that sort of thing, you know. She took a huff at something, and answered in French. But how the deuce does Uncle Sydney's daughter dress like a scarecrow, and talk French, and row boats about the bay?"

"It seems that you engaged her to row you. She will have been sitting in her own boat. The owner of Penlooe, over there, is her stepfather. But how she got hold of a few French words, I don't know. Educated dairymaid, I suppose."

"Ah, ah! She'll be touchy at having to row her own cousin. But is the cousinship all correct, eh?"

"Perfectly correct. Legitimate daughter of Sydney Trehanna, captain of Black Infantry, and Grace his wife; born in some unpronounceable place in India, and duly registered, whereof the proofs be visible, in writing, even unto this day. But you said Hester was here. What have you done with her?"

"Oh, she is down with one of her bad headaches to-day. Journey, I expect: always knocks her up sooner or later. But how long have you been here, Michael?"

"About a week, I think. I am afraid the grounds are in a most disgraceful state, really not fit to be seen, and the house utterly impossible for inspection; but we will do our best, and Lady Branscombe will kindly excuse age and infirmity in such a neglected old place."

Lady Branscombe gushed with delight at the noble park, sloping down to the sea; at the majestic trees, centuries old; at the bowling-green, where Sir Walter Raleigh had played with Bevill Trehanna; at my lady's bower, on the cliff out above the sea, where the stone pillars still stood, supporting carved cedar roof and doors which were crumbling into decay; and as they mounted grassy steps, winding round the hill to the level of the beautiful old Elizabethan façade, standing above its broad, antique terrace, and saw the big mullioned windows gleaming in the sun, and the towers and gables shining out in bold relief against the green woods which towered up at the back, she fairly overflowed with admiration (in which there was a *spice* of reality), and said that language was too poor to express all her feeling.

"Ya-as, must have been a handsome old place," said the more reticent Arthur. "Needs an awful lot of repair, though. Take you all your time, Michael, eh?"

"Probably," said Michael curtly. He was not anxious to discuss the ruin of Trehanna, or his own, before Lady Branscombe.

"If you will take Lady Branscombe round by the big yew allée and up those steps to the terrace, Arthur, you'll find rather a jolly little den in that left dwarf tower that stands there at the terrace corner. Kind of stone arbor, really,—and I'll go and see if I can rout out my aunt; but she is a kind of female hermit, and does not see many people."

"Oh, pray don't trouble her!" cried Lady Branscombe; but he was gone.

Michael not only succeeded in finding his aunt, but, by some superhuman effort, actually got a cupboard opened and delicate Meissen cups turned out, and, by dint of going himself to fetch it, produced his mother's especial teapot from a nook in Aunt Eliza's sitting-room, and had all the things (minus the lady) carried out to the dwarf tower; and in the course of time Miss Griffith herself appeared, in the last stage of Christian resignation and severity of Christian millinery. She recovered herself, however, and took on a lighter and more worldly tone under the influence of tea and the delicate homage of Lady Branscombe, who, for some reason, was particularly charming to Michael's aunt.

After tea, Michael, in response to some questions of Arthur's, took him away to the old stables, and did it in such a manner as to leave Lady Branscombe no option but to stay where she was.

Being a subtle young woman, however, she so improved the occasion and engaged the sympathies of the "poor worm" of the royal house of Griffith, that she heard all about her Welsh ancestry for six generations, and was quite ready to condole when mention was made at last of the unfortunate family to which the latest generation had become linked, and how the descendant of the Welsh kings was all alone in the wide world.

Lady Branscombe, too, was all alone—hadn't even a nephew. Her father was no more. Her husband—whom to say truth she married at that father's stern command, in spite of (well, never mind!)—her husband was dead, too (the trifling possession of three poorly-married sisters escaped her memory), and so she knew, alas, only too well what loneliness meant, even though ample means

were at her command. Yes, she had known Michael in former and happier days—before he left his native land. She had feared at one time that her father's disposal of her hand had wrecked two lives. Miss Griffith would not betray her; she would say no more. Only she had always preserved the memory of Michael's beloved Tre-hanna, and had longed to see it. Now her desire was gratified. There was such a charm about the place, such a fascination about the lady before her—the last scion of such an ancient race, so sweet, so unworldly—that Lady Branscombe hoped she would be allowed to come often to see her. She had some lovely little cups of old Vienna porcelain, a curious yellow, which she must really bring Miss Griffith. She saw that she was a connoisseur in china.

And by the time the gentlemen returned the ladies were fast friends.

CHAPTER VI

B ARBARA sat in a low, dimity-covered window-seat in Miss Vaughan's own room at the Vicarage; and opposite to her, in an old-fashioned elbow-chair, sat Miss Vaughan—"godmother," as Barbara always called her.

The young girl looked troubled; the straight little upright line between her eyebrows was sharply defined, the peach-blossom cheeks had faded to white, and the big brown eyes under their straight brows were clouded and dark.

"So you see they are all here, godmother—nearly all the present generation of Trehanna. I had always hoped that some good would come to the place in fresh hands belonging to the old race, but they're a degenerate lot."

"My dear child, if you will excuse me for saying so, they are no worse than many Trehannas who have gone before them."

"Not all!" cried Barbara hotly. "There were Trehannas who made the place what we can still see it *has been*."

"Money and good taste are wonderful factors; they may do a good deal now."

"Good taste! These people couldn't be anything but vulgar to save their lives. Trehanna oaks are just *timber* which may fetch so much in the market, and their fellow creatures are just two-legged animals who prey upon fish and impest the air."

"You won't forgive them that in a hurry, Barbie, I see. You should have caught a convenient crab, and given Lady Branscombe a wholesome splashing and cried quits."

"Oh, for that silly little woman? What does she matter, really? She is not a Trehanna. But no 'Arry, *towering* for his 'elth, could have had less of the nobleness of good birth than Arthur Trehanna. You should have heard him call me a 'big girl,' and say it was not worth while to take off his coat to row, because he was a heavy load for me to pull. And Michael called me 'Red-headed Gill' before I was out of ear-shot. Godmother, you *know* that it is not petty spite because they did not recognize Barbara Trehanna in the country girl, but the woeful disappointment that the beautiful old Trehanna that I've believed in and dreamt of the future for—the race that it was just my pride to belong to—should be represented by such miserable specimens."

"Well, Barbara, I won't defend the others, but I like the Squire. He is by no means a lady's man, I should say; but the vicar thinks he is now, as he used to be, thoroughly straight and just and remarkably able, and that is your stepfather's opinion, too. I dare say he may be rather hard and suspicious, but he has no easy work before him."

"I suppose not," said Barbara slowly. "Father says that everything seems to be just driving him to throw everything up and sell it. Fancy—to sell Trehanna!"

"He has been here all the morning, smoking and talking with the vicar. He does not say much as to his own feelings or intentions, but is as keen as a hawk to find out other people's, or to detect a fraud. I fancy Dick Trudgeon's reign is over. But, with or without Dicky, it seems useless to fight on with Carvarron, draining Trehanna of money for its fruitless mining, even without the mortgage. It is two years now since they lost the vein of ore, and the

mortgage expires next year, and they are going to let Cavarron go. And there is debt everywhere—the most fearful muddle.”

Barbara did not answer. Her brows were knitted and her eyes fixed absently upon the carpet.

“The curious thing, Barbie,” went on Miss Vaughan—“the curious thing is that everybody’s knowledge of boundaries and rights and roads, and the lie of the property generally, is so vague. Squire Michael really scarcely knows what is his. During poor Mr. Humphrey Trehanna’s life the most valuable documents seem to have disappeared relating to different holdings and tenancies and so on. Altogether, the Squire may perhaps be excusable in using the language he does about it.”

“Does he swear badly?” asked Barbara, with a half smile.

“Not in my presence, of course; but Jack the miller declared that he had been cursing Dicky Trudgeon up hill and down dale, and finished by taking him up like a rat and shaking his head nearly off, and flinging him with a kick outside Trehanna gates. There is weeping and wailing going on up there just now, I expect.”

“But what was it all about?”

“Oh, some small roguery of the Trudgeons, I suppose. I wonder what Miss Griffith thinks of it.”

Miss Griffith was not a favorite in Lanithiel, where she, in fact, rarely appeared. She did not approve of the church, which was Popish, she said. She did not like the vicar, who, she said, was worldly; and least of all did she like the vicar’s sister, who, she said, was puffed up with sinful pride, unbecoming to her station, flaunting in silks and velvets and artificial flowers, whereby she became a snare to the souls of her brother’s parishioners.

Now, as a matter of fact, Miss Vaughan dressed herself

very quietly after the prevailing fashion among English gentlewomen; but Miss Griffith, with the exquisite humility of the sect to which she belonged, arrayed her poor perishable body in grim and scanty drapery, and wore upon her head a bonnet which was very large, very untrimmed, and most righteously unbecoming. As regarded her religious standing, she was but a poor worm; but as regarded her social position, she was a Griffith—a descendant of the royalty of Wales, which had condescended to the family alliance with Trehanna. Long ago, when her sister (Michael's mother) had married Francis Trehanna, she would have condescended to ally herself more closely still to the old Cornish family by marrying Sydney Trehanna. But Sydney had never given any sign of understanding the honor intended for him, probably because he had only eyes and ears in those days for pretty Bab Vaughan, and although nothing came of that but the name of Barbara bestowed upon his child, Miss Eliza Griffith had not forgotten or forgiven it. It was believed that she had never seen Sydney's wife, and she never spoke of Barbara but as "the girl Cardew."

As the vicar and his sister were held in much estimation in Lanithiel, and David Cardew and his stepdaughter not less in their way, Miss Griffith's opinions had not endeared her to the neighborhood, which troubled her the less as she rarely went outside Trehanna.

Both Barbaras were silent for a while after the mention of Miss Griffith's name.

"What a home-coming it must have been to Michael Trehanna, after so many years, to return to the bosom of—Miss Eliza Griffith! I don't know which is in worse repair, she or the house; and goodness knows the state of ruin the house is in. From my window I can see the whole front—fallen chimneys, broken tiles, and a hanging shoot,

letting all the water run down the walls till I should think they must be sodden. And the wild tangle of shrubbery, and the rank grass on the old terrace, and the broken steps, and big oaks lying across the bowling-green. Godmother, you don't know what a queer aching of pity I have for all this. The place is as familiar to me as father or mother, though I have never set foot in it; and when I was in Dresden I dreamed Trehanna dreams night after night, and got so mixed up at last that I scarcely knew dreams from reality. I think I must have been a swallow in the Trehanna eaves before I took on human flesh as a nineteenth-century young woman. I know I always circled round one side of the building to the left corner under the gable window."

"Too big a jump, my dear child, according to correct Pythagorean notions—from a swallow to a girl. Perhaps you were a deer in the park, or a monkey in a traveling caravan, in between."

"Ah, you always laugh, godmother."

"My dear Barbie, you scarcely expect me to discuss solemnly the question of the transmigration of the swallow into a female Trehanna."

"No; but neither you nor nobody else can tell me why I have this curious, irritating love for the place my own father was turned out of. Some days I vex and chafe about it, and talk common sense to myself by the yard; and I say it is a rickety old barrack, and that the dense wood has an unwholesome smell, which comes across the water and reminds me of something else, and makes me sick; and that I will go away, or get married, and get out of this somehow—anyhow; and then my eye catches some broken old corner, and I fall to imagining the delight of doing it all up and making it beautiful again like it was long ago. I seem to see clear pictures of what it was,

or might be, and think and dream and puzzle over what I know for sure, and yet I don't know how I know."

"Barbara, I think you ought to go and stay for a while with the Coombes in Penzance, as they asked you. You will be getting quite morbid. You give your imagination too much rein, and it is not healthy for you."

"Give it rein! No, indeed; I pull it up short again and again. It works in a flash, just like a memory. Up comes a picture, with all sorts of queer little details in it—as clear as a photograph, only I take in the sort of surroundings slowly. But I do dream—that is, I suppose they are dreams,—but I get fairly bewildered sometimes."

Miss Vaughan was looking at her anxiously. This was unlike practical, clear-headed Barbie. Surely she was not coming under any mystical German influence (the only kind of mysticism in Miss Vaughan's mental repertoire).

"Don't stand a long way off in your mind and pity me, godmother. You always think I am unhinging my mind with German speculative books. I am doing nothing of the kind. I like to have a sound common-sense rule for things—in the general way, only they get past accounting for sometimes."

"Past accounting for?"

"Well, yes. Now, I'll tell you a queer thing, godmother. I am going to say, without exaggeration or nonsense, just what happened the other night."

"I had gone upstairs to bed, and it was so lovely in the moonlight that I put out my candle and opened my window a moment, and sat down and looked across at Trehanna. There was some one—the Squire, perhaps—pacing up and down the front terrace, and I watched for a moment. I put my hand in my pocket and absently took out the things in it before taking off my dress, and presently I found myself rolling to and fro in my fingers

the little strip of white which I had cut off the edge of the silk Captain Prance brought home. You remember it? I suppose I had stuffed it in my pocket in a hurry. The more I rolled it to and fro the stronger a faint sort of perfume seemed to be; and then—and then I had a queer confused feeling in my head like you get in a dream, or when you are trying to wake, and you know you are yourself, and yet you go on thinking and being somebody else. I was in my own room, in the half dark, rolling this silk in my hand, and somebody said: ‘Art forever fingering thy foreign silks, dame? Have a care, lest Gloriana hear of them and demand a share.’

“And I felt in an instant that I was in a brilliantly-lighted room, the sunshine pouring in from a window on my right, and I stood by a box with a bright piece of silk in my hand. A tall, dark, good-looking man stood near me. He had a scar’ on his cheek, and I knew him perfectly well—that is, I had that kind of familiar feeling that I knew all about him, without looking at him.

“But I saw the room distinctly. There was a big bed with colored silk hangings, and a silver looking-glass with branching arms fastened to the wall; and the man had come in from my left, leaving a door open, and behind the door was a room looking out on the sea. That was not all, for the man wanted *a red book*. *The red book*, he called it; and I knew, somehow, that this red book was wanted to decide a question about manorial rights. Then I—or that person with the box of silks—was angry and very contemptuous, as if any book were necessary to back the word of a Trehanna about his own estate. ‘Trove Trehanna,’ said she—or I—and flung down the piece of silk in her hand. . . . And I was sitting in my own room, and the whole thing—dream, or picture, or what you will—was gone; but I was sitting very straight,

repeating ‘Trow Trehanna’ as if it had been myself offended, and I had flung away my little roll of white silk. Queer, wasn’t it?”

“What did you have for supper that night, Barbie?”

“Oh, of course. I knew that you would ridicule the whole of it. You think I went to sleep in the window after a heavy supper, but I didn’t. It was just an instant, like a flash of memory. But did you ever hear of a red book about Trehanna estate?”

“No, of course not, dear. Nor anybody else. But what I do believe in is your real Cornish imagination. You will rival old Betsey Truscoe soon.”

“Well, godmother, I won’t tell you any more; but I’ll just remark that, as a rule, I don’t tell lies.”

“But, my dear child, I never accused Betsey Truscoe of *lying* either, though her stories of dreams and ghosts and witches are about the tallest I ever heard. She believes them, I am sure. I am rather sorry now that we let her have so much the care of you when you were a baby. Her influence must have lain dormant, I think. You may be pretty sure that old tales told by her are at the bottom of many of your dreams.”

“H’m! I never thought of that—perhaps they are,” said Barbara musingly. “It is true that that dream, though tremendously vivid, was remarkably like a flash of memory. If they had that red book, though, up at Trehanna, it might be very useful. Perhaps Betsey told me of that—long ago!”

“I never heard of it. But I don’t think, if it were very old, it would be much good in the present day. What they have lost in the family muddle are *bona fide* law papers, leases, and what not.”

“Well, anyhow,” said Barbara thoughtfully, “I am glad you reminded me that Betsey’s old tales may be

at the root of my queer fits of memory; for oh! the heaps of things concerning Trehanna—funny little every-day things—I seem to know, and can't tell how."

"Well, Betsey Truscoe, as you know, was born in your great-grandfather's time, on Trehanna ground. I believe her father was gardener or something, and she became servant in the house; so very probably she knows more of Trehanna than any of us."

"Of course," said Barbara, her face clearing and lighting up with an almost startling suddenness. She sprang up. "Of course, what a goose I am to worry. That's how I got my love for the old place, and all the funny old tales that aggravate Father David so. Hurrah, godmother! You know you are an awfully clever little godmother, and we'll just have a little twirl to celebrate the triumph of your wits. Up we go!", and, putting her strong young arms on the older and smaller lady's waist she had her out of her chair and performing a compulsory waltz before Miss Vaughan could stop her.

"Barbie! madcap! Be quiet! You are very disrespectful just because of your inches; you forget my age and infirmities."

Barbie's two hands were up at her own head pushing refractory hairpins deeper into the shining coil, her brown eyes shining dimpled with mischief.

"Not a bit," she said. "You ought to rejoice with me, you know, on Biblical grounds."

"I don't see what you rejoice at in being a second Betsey Truscoe."

"Ah, I do," said Barbara. "Sometimes I have thought I am a kind of maniac to have such a fond and foolish mind for Trehanna and everything to do with the place; but if I am only a second-hand Betsey Truscoe, I am not a maniac, only slightly mazed, don't you see?"

"What language you *do* use, Barbara, more forcible than elegant."

"That's nineteenth century, godmother. We have to call spades spades nowadays, not agricultural implements."

"It's a pity Betsey Truscoe is not a little younger," said Miss Vaughan; "for the Squire sadly wants some one to take Mary Trudgeon's place."

"Why, she's only ninety-one, godmother, and she gave me a piece of turnip pasty of her own making yesterday, and really it was delicious; but don't you think that I, as Betsey Truscoe the second, might do for Trehanna?"

She made a dart at Miss Vaughan's bed, produced a nightcap and pinned it up deftly to represent a house-maid's cap, fastened a towel as apron to her waist, made a bob curtsy, and in real Cornish drawl inquired:

"Ess fey, missus, an' be I fur tew gev the miulk tew the pegs, an' rin' daoun to Lanithiel town fur butter?"

This was an allusion to a commonly received story in the village as to Trehanna economy.

"Nonsense, child; that's just a libel, you know. But Trehanna might get a worse dairymaid, I dare say, if they had such a thing as a dairy."

"Miller Jack says that they can't have a dairy, because Miss Griffith smiles at the milk and turns it sour."

CHAPTER VII

THE new Squire found plenty to do, and started to do it with a restless energy which half pleased Farmer Cardew, his chief counselor, but frightened him for the future. Half measures were not to be taken, and if wrongs were to be righted and false service requited, Squire Michael might be trusted to leave no stone unturned until he had done it.

Great and sudden had been the fall of the Trudgeons, and Mary Trudgeon could not understand the proceedings of her liege lord Dicky, and delicately insinuated as much by saying:

"You'm a big fule, Dicky! That's what yew be! Yew was shook an' banged 'bout the 'ead, an' flinged out to geate like to a rotten turmut; and Miss Griffith up to Trehanna all the time a-sittin' in the *paler* a-singin' hymns, 'n' you never so much's said wan word to Squire 'bout hes awn flesh an' bled, an' what she'm like tew. You'm naw better nor a sheep's head. I've a mind to gaw up an' tell 'un meself, I have. Her 've a got all the pudd'n, an' us has got scat fur taken' ov ut. Bodmin jail, Squire talked 'baout, eh! He'd a dale better hitch up Miller's dunkey to the ould yaller charyet an' take hes Aunt Lizy to Bodmin jail!"

"Ole dummun," replied Dicky, "yew jest hould that there gab a yourn. I baint no sech fule as yew seem to think fer, and I du knaw they Trehannas. Man an' b'y I've a summered of 'em an' wintered of 'em these yer

fourty year, an' I just bide my time. This yer Squire is jist same's all of 'em. High an' mighty and a-bilin' awver long with items an' maggots en hes head. Hur be gwayn fur tu put Trehanna 'pun a different futten'—who but he? Hur waant hev nothin' as aint square un' fitty. An' may be as ur'll go awn like that thear fur six month—may be more—may be less; and then he'll fling up the whole consarn, an' off to Lunnon town, or where iver 'tes as he comed frum, 'pun the spree—an' he won't care a durn what goeth on tu the ould place, so long's he'm got summut fur tu spend. And Miss Griffith, her bides quaiet, and her sitteth to her paler and saith nort—and her'll get th' ould place to her awn hands again 'fore winter—an' us'll set daoun to Trehanna kitchen so soon's Squire be cross Twalmouth Bay, ef so be's yew houlds yer gab. Trehanna be all alike. Haint got no bottom."

At present, however, the Squire did not see his way to crossing Twalmouth Bay on his way to London or anywhere else. The fate of the family acres still hung in the balance. There was immediate profit to be made by felling timber, but there was a much larger immediate outlay necessary in repairs on the whole estate. The pointed gabled roof, which looked so picturesque, was full of holes, and the stables and outhouses half ruined; while Trehanna hedges had become almost a proverb. He seemed to have more real love for the place, and knowledge of its past, than the former late Squires, but things moved far too slowly in general to suit the impatient temper of the special correspondent.

To a man who has been accustomed to view the states of Europe like the squares on a chess-board, watching the players, move by move, and recording so many pawns taken, so many knights and bishops cornered, while harassing the king and creeping up for the final coup,

it was like life in death to get no news that was not a week old from the battlefields of the time. Do what he would, he could not accustom himself to look upon the felling of timber as being of so much importance as the fall of cities.

True, the timber was his own, and the cities were not.

Was it a consolation to him, in this period of doubt and worry, to be visited so constantly by a vision of his old life, years ago in London? A remembrance of the time when he was a clerk in the Civil Service whose articles in the *Evening Prevaricator* had brought him success enough to buoy up his hopes of prosperity and marriage, and had actually procured him the notice of his later chief on the *Daily Liar*, when he was tired of London and falsehood, and would have preferred getting a broken head from an enemy to a broken promise from a friend.

This vision of his old love, Lady Branscombe, and remembrance of his old life was vouchsafed him pretty often; for the lovely widow had taken such a violent fancy to Miss Griffith that her little black ponies came two or three times a week, unchallenged, through Trehanna lodge gates, bringing their mistress to flit about the park and terrace with Miss Griffith, or fetching Miss Griffith to Porthrhy, to the great dissatisfaction of the Trehannas, who found no charm in her saintly society.

Lady Branscombe, who had thought long ago that no one knew Michael as she did, was, perhaps, a little puzzled now to interpret correctly the workings of his mind, and gage exactly her own progress. His avoidance of her had ceased to be apparent, and his manner as host was the perfection of politeness; but when she tried to join practical sense to her admiration of Trehanna, and estimate its value and the cost of repairs, she found that she had made a mistake, and it took a good deal of her

time and all her temper to try and regain the ground she had lost.

Arthur and Hester Trehanna soon saw which way the land lay, and the former was by no means enraptured. His first idea, of espousing the fair widow himself, had commended itself to him more and more, as the days went on; but it was an inclination of the head more than of the heart, if that organ had anything to do with Arthur Trehanna's love affairs. However, as Lady Branscombe's devotion to Miss Eliza Griffith became so marked that her younger guests felt that they were by no means her first objects of attention, they determined to attempt a little adventure on their own account, the more so as Arthur Trehanna, being a great admirer of female beauty, intended going on the quest of lawful prey.

The little he had seen of the face of his cousin, Barbara Trehanna, had aroused a desire in him to see more.

So he confided to his sister Hester that the tale of the red-headed fishergirl, with which she had been entertained on their first return from Trehanna, did credit to Lady Laura's imagination, but was not remarkable for truth, and prevailed on Hester to come with him on an expedition to Penlooe to find the unknown cousin.

So, having declined a drive to visit dear Miss Griffith and a stony-hearted cousin who tolerated their visits, but neither invited nor returned them, they walked down to Lanithiel, and thence by the front way to Penlooe and its green garden-gate.

A big man was just issuing from the said gate as they came up.

"Does Miss Barbara Trehanna live here?" asked Hester.

"Iss fey," said the man cheerfully. "Her ain't fur off. Walk in, if yew please. Barbie!" he shouted, with stentorian lungs.

"Coming," answered a voice behind a thick box-tree, and a tall figure, bareheaded, with a curious bundle rolled up in an apron at her waist, appeared, as Farmer David, having let in the visitors, went his way.

Barbara was laughing and looking down at her apron as she came round the corner, but stopped suddenly as she came in view of the figures at the gate, and her face changed into a look of resentful pride.

Was this Lady Branscombe's red-headed fishergirl?

A simple dress of pale green cotton showed a figure which was entralling to Arthur Trehanna's sense of beauty.

The full white throat, however, was particularly erect, and a pair of brilliant brown eyes beneath level brows looked haughtily at Arthur Trehanna. The burnished hair, which lay in thick curls round the fishergirl's head, gave the suggestion of a crown.

"Cousin Barbara, I am Hester Trehanna," said the little dark lady at his side, "and we are come to apologize for being so rude to you the other day."

"Please come in," said Barbara, her brow clearing and her face lighting up. "I am so glad to see you—but you have nothing to apologize for."

"You see I am protecting Arthur," said Hester, with a laugh. "Poor little boy, he was afraid to come by himself to beg pardon, much as he wished it."

"Afraid of such a big girl?" asked Barbara, showing a row of milk-white teeth in a mischievous smile.

"Yes," said he. "I'm awf'ly sorry, and all that, you know, Cousin Barbara, but I hadn't a notion who you were."

"And I was very much astonished at such a sudden influx of Trehannas," said Barbara. "You know it is a rare pleasure to me to see my own kin," and she stretched

out to Arthur the hand with which she had already welcomed Hester. "Shall we make peace?" she asked.

"I was determined to sit here before your front door till you did," laughed Hester.

Barbara was holding the struggling, moving bundle in her apron all this time, while a great mastiff bitch was whining and snuffling at her burden.

"Please excuse my bundle," she said, "for I am afraid I must get rid of it before I can bring you into the house. Now, have patience, Trusty!"

"Are they puppies?" asked Hester. "Do let us see. It is so nice out of doors to-day that it seems almost a pity to go in."

"If you don't mind, then," said Barbara, simply. "I had them in the summer-house. It is this way," and she led her guests through a shady maze of box and laurel to a rustic summer-house, and untying her apron, spread it with its contents on the little round table, exposing to view four puppies, large enough to show distinctly that there was no mongrel blood in them.

"What funny little roly-polys!" said Hester.

"They are really good, are they not?" asked Barbara, turning to Arthur.

"Capital breed," he replied, lifting his eyes from the round arms which were half exposed by the sleeve.

Barbara colored vividly, and pulled down the linen to her wrists, and he turned to lift a little brown canine lump, when a threatening growl caught his ear, and he saw Trusty's white teeth close to his hand.

"Trusty, dear, you shall have them; there, take them away!" said Barbara. "But your temper is very short, madam."

Barbara turned to a wooden box with the puppies, and as she deposited them in the straw, said:

"Madam Trusty is a lady of very old family; I believe there are pictures of her ancestors up in the long gallery with the rest of the Trehannas."

"Oh! does she belong to Trehanna?"

"No, she belongs to Penlooe; but Penlooe itself once belonged to Trehanna. They join, you see," and she turned to point out to her visitors the lie of the land, with village, bay, and manor.

Hester had seated herself, and her eye fell on an open book as she did so.

"You read German, Barbara?"

"Oh! that is Ebers, isn't it? The Egyptian King's Daughter. Do you know it?"

"Yes, but in English. I am by no means a learned individual, you know."

"You were always such a lazy little beggar, Hess," said Arthur.

"Well, I'm anything but learned," said Barbara. "After five years in Dresden, I could not help speaking German; but the arithmetic master sighed over me dreadfully, and I sighed more than he did."

"Germany! I thought Michael said you came from India."

"So I did, originally, and I may have cried with the correct Hindustani wail; but I was not much more than three months old when I was brought to this country, so the literature of the East is not at my tongue's end, and I don't know any Sanskrit."

"Don't you thank Heaven for that? You'd have been starting all sorts of fads, new religions and things. Literary women are as bad as women with a mission. Intolerable nuisances!" said Arthur.

"Ah!" said Hester, "you think women should do nothing but simper and look pretty, Arthur. How about the ugly ones?"

"The 'red-headed Gills,'" remarked Barbara demurely.

Arthur looked up.

"Ah!" he said, "you heard, did you? What made him say that, now? What did he mean?"

"He meant this," said Barbara, quietly, touching the hair with her finger.

"Didn't think he could be such an ass," said Arthur. "How can you call that red? Why, it is splendid."

"Of course it isn't red," said Hester. "But why did he say 'Red-headed *Gill*'?"

"What *Gill*?"

"Oh, he used to enrage me by calling me that when I was a child," said Barbara. "He was alluding to Dame Gillian Trehanna, who was famous for her red hair in the time of Elizabeth. She was a sort of foundress of the family. You will have heard of her."

"Indeed we haven't," said Hester. "My father rarely spoke about Trehanna, and we are just shamefully ignorant about it all. It was always my mother's relations who were to the fore, you know; we lived very near."

"Oh, I'll tell you all the old story about her, if you like to hear; but it would be easier to tell, and pleasanter to you, if we go round the opposite side of the house, in view of Trehanna. At the top of our orchard the strawberries are ripe, and we might get some, and I'll tell you about 'Red-headed Gillian.' But perhaps you would rather go in and have the strawberries decently in a plate."

"Oh, it will be much nicer outside," said Hester, "and besides, then Arthur won't see how many I eat, and tell me about it for the next fortnight."

"It's as well to be frank about one's gluttony," remarked Arthur, as he walked on the other side of Barbara.

He dropped behind though, presently, to be able to

use his eyes unrebuked. Where had he ever seen such a beautiful figure, and the soft whiteness at the back of her neck, as she bent down to Hester; and those glorious coils of hair?

"What an unmitigated ass Michael must be to know this girl, and never look twice at her!" he thought.

His eyes devoured every movement, as she brought them through to the strawberry ground above the orchard, and set them to plucking the ripe fruit, while she ran into the house for cream.

Arthur managed to get beside her when, seated at last on a fallen tree, they ate their fruit and looked across the bay at Trehanna.

There stood the massive front with its broad terrace, and upon that terrace, walking up and down, were two female figures. The Squire was not visible.

"That will be Laura Branscombe and Miss Griffith, I expect," said Hester.

"No Michael as yet," said Arthur. "Perhaps he will be coming to call upon you?"

He wanted to say "Barbara" without the cousin, but shirked it at the last, and did not name her at all.

"Not very likely," she said. "You are the first Tre-hannas who have ever sought me out, to claim kindred."

"But surely you must have known Uncle Frank, or Humphrey?"

"They never acknowledged my relationship, or spoke to me," she said quietly.

"They were maniacs, you know," said Arthur consolingly. "At least, Humphrey was; about Uncle Francis I don't know."

"But why were they so afraid of you, Barbara dear?" asked Hester.

"I believe my father left his family in anger, and

during all the time he was in India they never wrote, nor he either. When he was killed in action he made Mr. David Cardew, who was a soldier too, promise to bring home mother and me. My poor mother had been married one year, when she became a widow with a baby six weeks old."

"Was she an Englishwoman?" interrupted Hester.

"She was born in India of Scotch parents. Her name was Lennox," said Barbara gravely. "Mr. David Cardew brought us home to receive money which my father had said was due to him, and Uncle Francis refused to hear one word about his sister-in-law or his niece. I believe he declared we were impudent impostors."

"I believe he was about as bad as they make 'em," remarked Arthur. "He and my respected progenitor couldn't hit it off at all."

"After a year, my mother married Mr. Cardew," continued Barbara, "and died in twelve months, and Father David has been father and friend and protector all my life to me. But I have never till now had a kind word from a Trehanna, nor received the slightest favor at their hands. I have never put my foot on Trehanna ground, nor had anything to do with them."

"What a shame!" cried Hester. "Well, here's a Trehanna who is ready to receive you with open arms, Barbara," and she put her arms round Barbara's waist as they sat. "But we haven't a house here to invite you to, unfortunately; for Laura Branscombe is not—oh—well—never mind," laughing.

"I'll wait till you have," said Barbara, smiling. "Perhaps you will go to stay for a while with the Squire."

"The Squire is as glum as a graven image just now," said Hester, "and I think Aunt Eliza is 'more glummerer.' No—I do not fancy that we shall be invited to stay at

Trehanna just now. But how about Dame Gillian and her story?"

Barbara clasped her hands over her knees, and looking across to Trehanna, began:

"Dame Gillian lived in the time of Queen Elizabeth. Bevill Trehanna, the Squire at that time, was a sailor, or perhaps we should say now, a gentleman adventurer; and he went sailing, sailing, in distant seas, plundering the Spaniard to the great satisfaction of Queen Elizabeth, who, when he brought home fine jewels and stuffs and laid them at her feet, was graciously pleased to accept them, and wish for more.

"She therefore made much of Sir Bevill, whom she knighted and smiled upon until the time when he took it into his head to get married.

"His next neighbor, upon the hills above, was Adrian de Lacey of Carvarron, who had an only child and heiress, Gillian. This Gillian was very good-looking; indeed even her red hair was admired by many, as being of gold, and it is said to have come to her feet.

"The barren sheep-runs of Carvarron covered copper, and there was a rich mine, which made Gillian de Lacey a very rich heiress indeed. And she fell in love with Bevill Trehanna, who was a handsome sailor, with a tongue which would wile a bird off a tree; and he fell in love with her, after his fashion, which was different; and they were married. And then the Virgin Queen showed her temper, as she very often did, and Bevill Trehanna was in great disfavor.

"At last, by some stratagem, he got Her Majesty's ear, and told her that as his love had been fixed too high ever to bring him happiness in this life, he had cast about for a feeble sun which would reflect the glory that dazzled him, and allow his poor heart to feed upon remembrance. As

he could not possess that glorious coronet of gold which lavish Nature had poured upon the head of Gloriana, rendering unnecessary the crown of baser metal which implied her sovereignty over all hearts, he had taken a wife whose locks were as much the hue of copper as her royal mistress's were of the hue of gold, that the baser metal might console him for the loss of the nobler.

"The Virgin Queen was graciously pleased to laugh disdainfully, and make very feeble jokes about copper and copper heads; which, being received as sublime wit, put her into a good temper, and she pardoned Sir Bevill.

"But Dame Gillian did not; and it was a mean thing, too."

"I think it was rather a good idea," said Arthur. "He must have been a knowing old card."

"I think he ought to have been ashamed of himself," said Barbara, "to belittle his own wedded wife in order to curry favor with another woman."

"Ah, of course. But I've heard of that kind of thing even until this day, strange to say. There's a good deal of human nature about it. But you don't like Queen Elizabeth. Isn't she supposed to be rather tip-top among the historical big-wigs? and she might really have had golden hair, you know, and been good-looking when she was young."

"Good-looking! A sandy-haired, long-nosed bag of bones, dressed up in a farthingale, and swearing like a trooper."

A peal of laughter from Hester.

"Oh, Barbara, my dear, what a pity she's dead! You might be Dame Gillian herself in your wrath. But what became of her? Did she live happily ever after—or did she poison Sir Bevill?"

"No—no," said Barbara slowly, a misty, far-off look

in her eyes. "Sir Bevill went away again to the Southern Seas, and left his wife; and when he came back he brought a dark Spanish woman whom he had taken as a captive—for ransom—for she was of high birth; but there was trouble—much trouble—and then—death."

"Poor Dame Gillian! Had she any children?"

"Yes, two. One died, and for the other she planned and saved, and built and managed, till he became estranged, and Dame Gillian died very lonely. But half Trehanna was rebuilt and remodeled in her time. She was a most wonderful housekeeper and Lady of the Manor. She was that kind of woman who is so full of vitality and force of character that she seems like the breath of life to the place.

"That was a time—then," continued Barbara, looking down across the bay, "when Trehanna was *alive*. There, to the left, hidden by the beech-tree, was the boat-house, and where the bank is steep was a big landing-quay jutting out, and the waters swarmed with little craft, plying to and fro from Twalmouth and St. Ulph's and Naylor, and all up and down the coast, and across to France, and up to Holland. There beyond, where the cliffs rise seaward, they watched the ships sailing off to the Southern Seas; and the *Golden Hope*, Trehanna's own cruiser, rode at anchor. There's a stone pavilion at the very point of the cliff, called the 'Dame's Bower,' and there they watched day and night for the great Armada, every man chafing and longing to be let loose, like dogs in a chain; and at last, when a great, high, unwieldy shadow passed, gray in the distance, it seemed unreal, too much longed-for to be true; and the fierce whisper of those that watched passed into a roar, and the men rushed for the rock steps and the boats. No kissing of good-by; no promise of return; only to man the Trehanna's *Golden Hope* and Trelawney's

Kestrel, and be off. Then the signal-fires! High up on Carvarron, and far out at Twalmouth Headland, and from the Dog Cliff beyond Porthrhyn; and as they flared the women grew hot and cold, and longed to don doublet and hose and be at the Spaniard. There was life in it all, wild hope and daring.

"Then the storms!"

Her voice ceased, and she sat quiet for a moment.

"What an imagination you have, Barbara!" said Hester presently.

"No imagination at all," she answered quickly, "just truth."

"Where did you get it all?" asked Arthur. "I'm afraid that not even a history of the halls of my ancestors could set me grubbing in old books to know what the place was like when they had all the money that they haven't left me."

It was like a douche of cold water.

"Oh, I had an old nurse, called Betsey Truscoe, who was born ninety years ago or more in Trehanna, and who knows more old tales about the place than ever stood in books," said Barbara.

CHAPTER VIII

SQUIRE MICHAEL did not see much of his cousins. For one thing, his domestic arrangements, under Aunt Eliza, were so profoundly uncomfortable that he avoided all temptation to expose an outsider to annoyance, not to say dirt and indigestion. And for another thing, his whole time and thoughts were taken up in ceaseless turning over of possibilities for and against the sale of Trehanna.

It had not escaped him that Arthur Trehanna regarded the place in the light of a possible purchaser, and as he glanced at the graceful female figure walking so lovingly with Aunt Eliza, he muttered in his beard: "Where the body is, there shall the eagles be gathered together." His one intimate and associate, besides David Cardew, was his old friend and former tutor, the vicar.

Seated one evening over a pipe in the study of the latter, he said:

"If I want to get rid of the place there will be no need to advertise."

"But it won't come to that, will it?" asked the vicar.

"If I could lay my hand on ten thousand ready money to-morrow, I should say 'No,'—but I can't."

"Well, look here," said Mr. Vaughan impressively, "I've got an offer to make you, Michael, not from myself, but a business offer which might bring very great advantage to you."

"Glad to hear it," said Michael. "Fire away, sir."

"But you may resent it. I don't know."

"Not likely, if it's for the good of Trehanna."

"It's from David Cardew. He consulted me about it, and I—well, I half approve, I may say—but he didn't like to speak to you himself—" He paused.

"I'm all attention," said Michael, pulling away at his pipe.

"Well—the offer is this: David Cardew has seven thousand pounds lying in St. Austell bank just now, and paper and property to a much larger amount on which he could easily raise a few thousand more without encumbering Penlooe. This was to be the dowry of your cousin, Barbara Trehanna; and he offers you the seven thousand pounds down, and the remaining three at two per cent. on two conditions—". The vicar paused.

"Seems too good to be true," said Michael. "How about the conditions?"

"One condition is that he shall, himself, be your properly accredited bailiff or steward (there's a minor clause there, about a bookkeeper, or subordinate for Penlooe and Trehanna)."

"Cardew as steward is as good as another thousand," put in Michael.

"And the other condition, upon which it all depends, is . . . that you marry his stepdaughter Barbara, and make her mistress of Trehanna—if she will have you."

"The devil!" cried the Squire, with eyes and mouth open in astonishment; while his pipe knocked its own ashes out as it rolled to the floor.

"Not the devil at all, sir. Your own cousin; and the prettiest girl in the neighborhood—and the best."

"Red-headed Gill? I'm damned if I do!"

"Much more likely to be damned if you don't," said the vicar; "and I'll trouble you to choose your language better when you speak of a lady."

"I beg your pardon, sir. I quite forgot where I was. I withdraw the language, but not the opinion."

"I doubted at first of the wisdom of the proposal, I must say. But on consideration I saw a good many reasons for thinking well of it—as David Cardew does."

"I dare say. He gets the girl off his hands, and buys a husband for her with the money that makes her mistress of Trehanna, and he'll see himself that the money is well applied. Uncle David is no fool," with a sneer. "But you don't buy Michael Trehanna into bondage."

"Really, I don't see why you should be so exceedingly bitter about it, Michael. You refuse, good and well; then there is no harm done. And perhaps it is a good thing, for who knows what Barbara would say to it? She knows nothing at all about it, and now never will, if you hold your tongue."

Michael was silent. He picked up his empty pipe, and put it in his pocket.

"To tell you the truth, Squire Michael," continued the vicar calmly, "your Uncle Sydney's daughter has far more claim upon you and Trehanna than she has upon Cardew, who is no relation at all, really. There are three thousand owing her, if I am not mistaken."

"So you have heard that, too. Yes, it is true, Boyle says. Worse luck for us all."

"It is quite natural that I should hear of it, for Barbara has spent almost as many days of her life here with my sister as at Penlooe; so that I know how things stand. The girl herself absolutely refuses to make any claim for this money, but she of course is a minor. She has been very badly treated among you Trehannas, and has felt the slight on her parents' memory a good deal. Your father, you know, actually declared that Sydney had never married Barbara's mother, which was a most unjustifiable

—a—mistatement. But Cardew's great reason for wishing Barbara to be mistress of Trehanna is her own extraordinary love for the place.

"It is almost like a kind of cult. She knows every scrap of history and tradition connected with the family that can be known, is ready to sacrifice her own interests rather than impoverish the estate, as you see by her refusal to demand her rights, and altogether she would be more likely to be happy in her father's old home than elsewhere. She might have married exceedingly well more than once, but she won't leave Penlooe. And then there is the fact that for a girl of nineteen she is the most practical, thorough-going housekeeper I know. What Farmer Cardew would be on the estate, his stepdaughter would be in the house."

"Oh Lord, where should I be?" ejaculated Michael.

"Master in your own house, I should hope," said the vicar.

"Not I. If I am not master of myself, but have sold myself to Mammon in the shape of a red-headed dairy-maid, how should I be master of anything?"

"Tut, tut! you're all wrong, young man; but unless you find it out for yourself there is no hope for you. So I'll say no more about it. How are your creature comforts getting on since the Trudgeons went?"

"Oh, don't ask," groaned the Squire. "My aunt got a maid from somewhere who is a convinced Christian, she says. She has never been convinced of the use of cleanliness, I am sure; and I am nicely balanced on the verge between starvation and dyspepsia. I can't make out what Aunt Eliza lives on. I never see her eat anything but biscuits and some kind of invalid slush. Don't you think Miss Vaughan might have somebody she could send us who would make life a little less hideous?"

"My dear man, the house wants a mistress. A maid can but do what she is told to. I suppose Miss Griffith is a—an invalid."

"I believe so," said Michael.

* * * *

Mr. Vaughan was not in a hurry to communicate the result of his negotiation to Farmer Cardew. He did not even tell him that he had broached the subject to Squire Trehanna.

"Don't be in a hurry," he said to Uncle David. "We had better wait a bit. Marriage is a serious thing, and I'd rather not hurry two young people into it unless I was pretty sure it would come right."

So he did not even mention it again to Michael Trehanna. He was pretty shrewd, and had heard stories here and there of the former relations of Porthrbyn's tenant with the Squire. He saw that Michael was restless and uneasy and bitter. It might be that not the fate of the estate was troubling him alone, but his own fate too.

He had spoken of going into bondage in marriage with Barbara. Probably the matrimonial fetters would gall less if they bound him to the "fine lady up to Porthrbyn." Then he would not need Uncle David's money, nor his stewardship, nor his stepdaughter.

But the solution of the difficulty would come easiest of itself. Farmer David would hear of the new alliance, and be relieved that his own offer had not been made.

At Trehanna lately Aunt Eliza had become quite lively. Though still a worm, she was becoming a less dusty one, and her poor perishable body certainly looked to more advantage when covered by filmy creations of lace which dissembled her angles.

It was so sweet, after so many years of sorrow and neglect, to find herself once more the object of solicitude,

and particularly a solicitude which expressed itself in such charming and acceptable gifts. Always just the right thing.

She did not see her solicitous friend rummaging her drawers at Porthrbyn for "something more for that insatiable old Griffith," nor hear the expressive sniffs of the lady's-maid, who missed and inquired for many an object, on which she had been reckoning for herself in the future.

There was no pact between the two ladies. How should there be? But Aunt Eliza understood the wistful longing of the sweet young widow to repair the wrong which she had been *forced* to commit in leaving Michael Trehanna for Sir Thomas. How she would delight to restore Trehanna to its former greatness, and gain one glance of pleasure from Michael's eyes! How she would love to surround her dear Miss Griffith with the luxury which that lady's frail health so imperatively demanded, and which she feared was not obtainable in that neglected mansion! And Aunt Eliza's breakfast-table now often boasted of delicate pâtés de foie gras, or of salmon, delicious in its pink freshness; while her tea-table was stocked with cakes.

Michael one morning found before him some viand more familiar to him in Vienna than at Trehanna, and, unthinkingly, ate it up, remarking afterwards, in his ignorance, that the cook was improving.

On learning, however, whence it came, he colored hotly.

"Am I to be fed on the crumbs from the rich man's table?" he asked.

Aunt Eliza was meekly grieved, and remarked pensively upon the cruelty of rejecting the simple harmless generosity of that sweet young thing. And to excuse her own acceptance of the same, she descended on the feelings of the donor, on the unselfish devotion which prompted the

longing to restore Trehanna to its place among the neighbours, and upon the beautiful shyness which would not allow Lady Branscombe to offer Michael himself a loan which would release him from the grinding care which she saw in his face, which she told Miss Griffith was the aim of her life to remove.

"Are you a properly accredited ambassador, Aunt Eliza?" he asked.

"Oh, my dear Michael, there was no formal message; but I have seen enough of the dear child's unselfish heart to know how it stands with her. She was sacrificed to the filthy Mammon of this perishing world, from which her sensitive nature revolted in disgust.

"She has drunk deep of the bitter waters of Marah. She has eaten the bread of affliction. And now, chastened by sorrow, her greatest wish is to be a faithful steward of the goods of this world. But her heart is very full of affection. Even for me—frail worm—crushed, humble as I am—she has shown the tenderest feeling. But for you—oh, my dear nephew—what a wealth of devotion! Surely you cannot be blind to it. As her husband you would have full command of funds sufficient to restore Trehanna. She has fifteen thousand a year, Michael."

"She seems to have been very confidential with you, Aunt Eliza."

"Yes, Michael. I often feel as if she were, indeed, what I hope she will be some day, my own dear niece," said the lady pensively.

"Don't set your affections upon the goods of this perishable world, Aunt Eliza," he said grimly, "either in nieces or in pâtés de foie gras. They all have their prices," and he walked away, leaving his aunt in uncertainty as to what he meant.

He went out to the "sea-walk," a lovely path on the cliff above the sea, beyond the plantation which screened house and park from Atlantic storms. The wind was rushing in, salt from the ocean, and great waves were breaking in a roar against the rocks, dashing the spray high up the cliffs. Here on an old broken seat he sat, gnawing his mustache and staring with unseeing eyes upon the waves, while a very devil of outraged pride stormed his soul.

This woman Laura, whom he saw now as a shallow, insipid, greedy schemer, had been his idol. What a fool he must have been! That he should have been taken in by her, and his whole career wasted away, and himself made into a homeless vagabond! His contempt for himself, for his gullibility, was almost as great as his contempt for her.

But now she had the price for which she had sold herself, and stretched out her hand for *his* treasure, the old home which had been his pride and love all his life; which he had painted to her in his lover's eagerness as an Eden upon earth, which he would win for her, some time, if Humphrey would sell. That was in the days when she was poorer than he, when she had been obliged to plan and scheme to get decent raiment for the society of which she was so fond. Then young Trehanna of Trehanna, backed up by the St. Leger connection, had been considered a fine young fellow by Colonel Carrol, and Laura, sweet, pure, lovely Laura, had given him her promise of fidelity, had given him her rosy lips to kiss, and had laid the flaxen head upon his breast, in sweet confidence that he knew nothing of the pearl necklace just sent her by Sir Thomas Branscombe, or of the wedding gown being sewn for her even then, to be paid for by Lady Branscombe. *She* obliged by her father to marry against her will! The father whom she so charmingly twisted round her finger

—pah! A clean-minded girl could not have touched that leering bag of diseases called Thomas Branscombe.

And now times were changed. As she had sent him the crumbs from her table, she would give him the broken morsel of herself, what Sir Thomas the roué had left. She would take him and his ruined home, and he would eat the bread of her bounty, and sit at *her* table in his own house. . . . If he refused, and let Arthur Trehanna have the place, still she triumphed, for she would marry *him*, and, with her ill-won money, the price of her honesty reign in Trehanna . . . while he would be cast out from his old home forever.

So Michael Trehanna gave place to the devil, or to many of them, which tore him for the whole morning, and then he made up his mind to a course of action which would put an effectual stopper on Lady Branscombe's unselfish devotion.

That afternoon he went, for the first time since his return, to Penlooe. It was a wonder that neither Arthur nor Hester was about, for they were liable to be with Barbara now at any hour of the day.

Farmer David was at home, and quite willing to see "Squire," and they were closeted in the best parlor for nearly an hour.

At the end of that time the former came out and shouted, "Barbie, you'm wanted."

There was a quick step from the front kitchen, and Barbara appeared, her fingers all rosy with currant-juice, and a big white apron on.

"Take off that there apern," said Father David. "Squire Michael wants to speak to ee."

Barbara's eyes opened wide. "In a minute, father," she said obediently, and presently returned minus apron and crimson fruit-stains.

Farmer David brought her into the best parlor and said:

"Here a be Squire, and you'm best spake plain yerself. Her'll just do 'cordin' tu her awn notions."

And the Squire found himself looking into a pair of brown eyes not so very far beneath the level of his own while Farmer David went out.

The dusky shadows were gathering in the little parlor, for it was getting late—and the Squire could not see with any clearness the red mop he had pictured to himself.

"How do you do, Cousin Barbara?" he said. "I hope it does not inconvenience you to speak to me for a few moments."

"Not at all," replied Barbara politely. "Please sit down," and she seated herself.

Her cousin stood, however, leaning over the back of his chair, his eyes on the ground.

"Your stepfather thought it best that I should speak straight out with you myself, and so I have come to ask you, Will you marry me?"

Barbara was dumb with surprise. What new piece of insult was this? She rose hurriedly, and leaning on the table, near which she had sat, half entrenching herself behind it, asked:

"Is this some formality in law, for the sake of that money, or have you a bet on the subject?"

"A bet? Certainly not. What kind of cad do you take me for? It is a formality in so far as it needs to be asked for you to become my wife and mistress of Trehanna."

"Then the formality is gone through with, and I answer: No, thank you. I decline the honor."

She had drawn herself up to her full height. The hand that touched the table shook and her face was pale, but her eyes blazed as she looked at him.

He looked at her calmly, and then said:

"That's the preliminary. Now we'll discuss the question."

"I don't see the necessity," said Barbara. "I may, I suppose, be very grateful for the honor you do me, but I beg to decline it."

"You said that before. But you might have some sympathy with the feelings of a rejected suitor, and give your reasons."

"I don't think you need any sympathy, just as I don't see any reason why I should accept your proposal."

"Mr. Cardew did. Come now, Cousin Barbara, let us give over quarreling. I assure you that I hadn't the slightest idea of offending you. Sit down, and just let me tell you about it."

"I am not angry. But it seemed to me that you could have little respect for a girl to ask for her as you would ask the loan of a pin."

She came back to her chair, however, and he continued:

"It is quite true that if I had been a love-lorn swain I should not have asked you point-blank in that kind of way. It is, honestly speaking, a business matter."

Barbara inclined her head coldly, watching him as she did so.

"Your father and I have gone over the business matters relating to Trehanna, and we both see that affairs have reached such a crisis that unless ready money can be employed at once upon the estate Trehanna must go to the hammer."

"Yes?" said Barbara.

"It seems rather a pity, doesn't it?" he asked, looking narrowly at her.

"Rather," she replied briefly.

"Trehanna owes you three thousand, Barbara."

"Ah, ha," said the girl, with a long breath, her eyes lighting as she bent forward. "That is it, then. You cannot pay the money and you offer me marriage instead."

"That is part of the reason."

"Surely Father David might have spared you this trouble. I do not want the money, and I certainly do not want a husband as payment of a bad debt."

"And the impecunious owner of Trehanna would be sorry recompense, you think; but that is not all. Trehanna is not lost if you will help me to save it," and he repeated the offer made to him through Mr. Vaughan, of which he had just discussed the conditions, he said, with Mr. Cardew.

"So I was actually offered to you," said Barbara, blushing so painfully that the tears came into her eyes.

"N-no, not offered. It is just part of the contract."

"And Father David did it. Oh! I didn't think it of him. I didn't think he would have done it."

Her distress was so acute and so evident that Michael in common courtesy, could not but come to her aid.

"You must not look upon it in that way," he said. "I suppose it would be hard for you to view the thing in an impartial, impersonal kind of way. It is not me you marry, but Trehanna—not to give me a wife, but to give Trehanna a mistress. Mr. Cardew dwelt very particularly on your great love for the place; the fact that your name and that of your parents, would be completely rehabilitated by the act,—and that what he would do, without on the estate, would be seconded by you—as mistress—within."

Barbara had grown very white and grave.

"I would do a great deal for Trehanna," she said. "I would work for the place as Father David works, but

frankly you do not care about marrying me, Cousin Michael, any more than I care about marrying you. Why should we do it?"

"There is no other way of helping, Barbara; you are too young to be any man's housekeeper unless as sister, wife, or daughter. If you look the thing in the face fairly you will see that."

"You look at the giving up of my whole life to the nursing of your estate, very calmly," she said dryly.

"No," he replied. "It will be yours just as much as mine. Nay, more. For if you were once fairly established as mistress there I could go back again to where I came from and trouble you very little. Speaking plainly, Barbara, it is scarcely marriage which I proposed. I have no love to offer you, nor do I ask any from you. You will be Barbara Trehanna and your own mistress as fully and freely afterwards as before; but with the liberty of action and the title of a married woman you will have authority which you could not have else. It is a social contract, a partnership in which you and I, as brother and sister, may be good comrades, and nothing more."

There was a dead silence.

Barbara was leaning her head upon her hand and her face was hidden.

"Will you think of it?" said Michael. "Talk with Farmer David and decide quietly. I will wait till to-morrow."

"Very well," said Barbara. "But remember I do not promise in the least to alter my decision."

"Of course," said Michael. "By the way, there is one thing. If you have any fancy of your own, any attachment to which you would be untrue, if you became mistress of Trehanna, don't let anything weigh with you to give it up for possible advantage."

She liked him better as he said that than she had liked him before.

"You need not be afraid," she said, "I am not in love with any one, and don't expect ever to be. I have been told that I am detestably cold-hearted and reasonable."

"So much the more hope of a clear head. Then good-by till to-morrow at this time." And he was gone.

Father David and his "maid" had a long, earnest talk that evening on the beach at the headland, watching the ships pass far away in the moonlight and fade away in the silence of the great distance.

As they returned Mrs. Cardew met them in the porch. She had been in Twalmouth that day and had brought back large pieces of new house-linen to be folded away in the press in the spare room, and came to tell Barbara that there was no longer room there for the roll of Indian silk, which must be given over to her own care in her own sanctum.

"An' yu kin put 'n away vitty, Barbie, tu yer awn cubberd like a gude maid."

Barbara acquiesced. She was not thinking much of Indian silk just then, but as she took the parcel the strange perfume aroused her attention.

"Queer scent it has," she said.

CHAPTER IX

HOW she passed the night nobody knew, but the Barbara who came downstairs to breakfast was a very different-looking Barbara from the one who had gone up the night before.

"You'm lookin' bad, my maid," said the farmer sympathetically, as he sat opposite his Barbie: "couldn't 'ee sleep, then?"

"Not very well, father," she said quietly. "A cup of tea will be just the right thing, and then I will go down to the Point. Nothing does my head so much good as the sea wind."

Her eyes had dark circles, and her cheeks were absolutely white; and to relieve the aching head she had left the two long plaits of hair, which were usually closely coiled about her head, to hang loosely down her back.

The morning passed away, and she did not return.

"Hur took a mossel o' bread 'long weth her," said Mrs. Cardew at the early dinner-hour as Barbara did not appear.

"Mayhap hur'm gone to passun's."

It was four o'clock when Squire Michael appeared again at the farm.

"I'm rather early, Uncle David," said he. "I had quite forgotten yesterday that I am engaged to dine at Porthrhyn to-night, so that I am obliged to hurry up my phenomena. Is Barbara in?"

"No, hur baint," said the farmer. "Hur baint so well to-day, and hur went daown to Point there fur tu rest her

head," extending his arm to show that he meant the extremity of the headland on which Penlooe house was built. "Do ee mind the ould path, Squire? Maybe yu mout find her."

"Perhaps you can tell me how she has decided," suggested Michael.

"Na, na—I dun knew. Us must leave the maid fur tu say."

So the Squire took his way, in evening dress, with a light overcoat buttoned across it, to the small path which led down the rocks to a slightly sheltered indentation on the beach. He reached the sands, stepped round a jutting rock, and there—leaning against the gray background of the cliff, her hands clasped loosely in front of her, her head resting against a tuft of gray-green sea-grass—was Barbara.

It was an unconscious picture which struck him at once. He was conscious of an uneasy twinge. This was the red-headed hop-pole who, being set in the place she could never have hoped for, would be grateful for assured position, and industrious as a housekeeper? Or—what in his secret soul was far more to him—was this the woman who would drive home to Laura Branscombe's inflated vanity the arrow of revenge—that Michael Trehanna preferred a red-headed dairymaid to herself? The picture before him made him doubtful—gave him a certain shock of surprise—seeing it now in broad daylight.

The clinging sea-blue of the linen gown outlined the grand figure of the girl against the rock, whose harsh grain threw into sharp relief the fresh whiteness of cheek and throat—"the complexion which goes with that hair," he thought, "minus the freckles," which curiously enough were absent. Perhaps, to irritate him by further opposition, the hair was by no means the red he had insisted on in

his mind, though one long braid hung across her shoulder to the knee. Her face was colorless, save for the faint pink of the mouth, and the dark eyes in deep shadows looked wistfully, sadly out towards the sea.

"Good afternoon, Cousin Barbara," he said aloud.

She started, throwing a frightened glance at him, and a rush of color reddened neck and cheek.

"You are earlier than I expected," she said, flinging back the hair which had betrayed itself, and facing him to conceal it, as she stood erect against the rock.

"Yes, I must apologize," he said. "I had quite forgotten that I am due to dine at Porthrbyn for the first time to-night, so I am obliged to come a little earlier. Is it too early for you? Shall I go away and come to-morrow?"

"No, thank you," she said; "it is well to get these things over."

"You are quite right. Then you have made up your mind?"

"Yes . . ." A pause. "I will do what you asked. I will go to Trehanna, and try to do my duty as its mistress. It will not be play"—she paused—"and our contract will be . . . as you said, a comradeship without any sentimentality."

A half-smile touched the lips of the Squire. It was scarcely necessary to warn him that he need not be sentimental.

"Bravo, Barbara!" he said. "Who knows what you may make of the old place yet? I shall go back to Bosnia with a comfortable feeling that Trehanna is in thoroughly good hands."

Barbara was silent. His duty as master of Trehanna seemed to trouble him little.

"But now the next thing is that what has to be done

should be done quickly, and you must be made *Dame Barbara* as soon as possible."

"Yes, I have thought of that," she said quietly. "I suppose you don't want publicity, and I should like the ceremony to be as quiet and businesslike as the whole contract."

"Yes," he said, and paused. He had thought that women always liked a little breath of reverence or fuss of some sort about a wedding; but surely *he* need not object.

"The bride has only to command," he said.

"In Lanithiel we should be gaped at by the whole village," she continued.

He looked at her wonderingly. Did she want to go to London?

"The old Carvarron church is rarely opened now," she said, "except to strangers; but it stands within Mr. Vaughan's parish. I wish that the ceremony might be there."

"I scarcely know the place," he answered.

"It is at least three miles from here—on the heights of Carvarron. It stands away from the ruins of the old tower, in a sort of glade, with paths leading to it from the hamlet and the sheep-farms. Sometimes, but very rarely, there is service there. And sometimes people are let in to see the tombs of dead-and-gone de Laceys, our ancestors."

"I remember it now," he replied. "But you don't think people would find out that there was to be a wedding there?"

"Not if you are careful. We may surely go on a picnic to Carvarron ruins. I could go with godmother and the vicar and Father David; and you could get there accidentally without mentioning it to any one."

"Sounds simple enough. But people don't usually go to picnics in bridal array."

"Do you want bridal array? I wear a white frock often enough. Orange blossoms are scarcely needed for me to espouse Trehanna manor."

"A tasteful selection of title-deeds would be more to the purpose, you think?"

"As curlpapers?" she asked, with a gleam of fun.

"Well, scarcely," with a smile; "however, it can be just as you wish, of course. But there is another detail. Where do you wish to go from church?"

"We'll picnic up at Carvarron, and then—go home."

A bitter smile curled Squire Michael's lips. Home! What a home to bring a bride to! Was he thinking of the old projects he and Laura used to make of a wedding tour into Elysium—for surely no earthly construction of dwelling and no terrestrial landscape could have come up to the glories their fancies had painted.

There was to be no wedding tour for him.

"By the way, that reminds me of another thing, Barbara," he said,—they had seated themselves by this time on the rocks. "You must have at least a habitable room to come to in Trehanna, and I'm an awful duffer about furniture and all that kind of thing. There's room enough and to spare; but the beds and tables may be all eaten by rats and moths for all I know."

"You'll have to let the sun in on them to see," suggested Barbara.

"Well, yes, of course. But I wish you could see for yourself, first of all, where you want to be; you know Aunt Eliza has my mother's old rooms. She is so afraid of draughts or stairs—and I don't know what; they are on the right of the hall, you know, as you go in."

"Oh!" said Barbara.

Aunt Eliza was to remain, it seemed.

"Could you not come and see things a little, so that your home-coming to Trehanna should not be so strange?"

"Oh, yes," said Barbara calmly. "The sooner the changes begin now, the better, I suppose."

"Then would you care to come to-morrow?"

"If you wish—yes. But if you do not object I should like godmother, Miss Vaughan, to come too."

"All right; very good idea. Then I will expect you to-morrow afternoon. You will row across?"

"Yes."

"Then I will say good-by—till to-morrow."

He held out his hand, and she put her cold fingers into his and said "Good-by."

Certainly there was no sentimentality.

As he re-entered Penlooe he found the farmer smoking a meditative pipe in the porch.

"Well, Uncle David," he said cheerfully, "so you are to be my father-in-law."

"Eh!" said the farmer blandly.

"Barbara agrees to be—my wife."

The last words came out after a momentary hesitation. She had not used the words at all, he remembered—but it was all the same.

"Ay, aye. Her've a said 'Yes,' have her? Lord send as it may be the right thing, Squire! Times I says to myself, 'Davy, you'm a danged ould fule fur tu hand that there purty maid auver tu a life like as you've a zeed to Trehanna many's the time!'"

"What? You are not doubting your own wisdom now surely, Farmer? Why, you and Barbara will be practically masters of the place—to make your own life."

"Ay, aye," said the farmer; "but hoam's hoam, Squire, here to Penlooe, an' I've niver zeed nort like ut up to Great House, axin' your pardin' fur the sayin' so."

"You are quite right," said the Squire. "But peopel that have a faculty that way can make a home anywhere. And homes split up, and have to be made over again. That's the story all the world over."

"True, 'tes; and ould Davy wan't bide fur iver, an' where'd Barbie be then?"

"That's it, you see. Well, I must be off, Uncle David. There's happier times coming for Trehanna and all of us, my hand on it."

The farmer gave his hand a hearty grasp, but as he watched the retreating figure he muttered:

"Ay, aye. He'm Trehanna—taketh all and giveth nort, as folk du say. Her niver said so much as 'thankee' fur the finest maid to Carnwell—Lord send Barbie happy. Her wan't have nort tu say tu t'other chaps."

And so Squire Trehanna mounted his horse and rode away to Lady Branscombe's dinner-party. He took a very circuitous route; but his reflections by the way must have been of a very satisfactory nature, for when he arrived last, instead of being cast down and humble-minded by reason of keeping so many people waiting, he was unreasonably lifted up.

Lady Branscombe, arrayed like the morning star emerging from filmy clouds of night and sorrow, caught the eye of Aunt Eliza, who had so far stooped to the customs of this perishing world as to array herself in black satin, in the hope of a good dinner. Both these ladies noticed the change in Michael. Aunt Eliza had managed to convey to Lady Branscombe the tenor of the conversation which she had had with Michael the day before.

"He asked me if I was an accredited ambassador, my dear; but I told him he must come to you himself."

And the two ladies drew their own conclusions as to the source of the Squire's cheerfulness.

His good-humor was quite contagious, and Miss Vaughan, who was next him, seemed intensely interested in his conversation.

Lady Branscombe had managed to be his neighbor on the other side. She found his deference of to-day infinitely more charming than his devotion of long ago.

He was not the timid, impassioned lover whose adoring glances forever sought her face, nor the cold, sarcastic man of the world she had met at Vienna. Neither was he grave and gloomy, as of late. Well as she thought she knew him, this was a Michael whom she did not know.

It was Trehanna of Trehanna—a witty Cornishman, all alive with jest and story, with political allusion and repartee, with knowledge of all sorts of local questions, throwing the ball of conversation to and fro, to the great enjoyment of sundry guests, among whom were "Passon" Vaughan and a neighboring country squire, Sir Lionel Wearne. It was after a shrewd Cornish *bon-mot*, which Michael had quoted in the vernacular, commenting on to Mr. Vaughan, *sotto voce*, in Latin, that Sir Lionel said:

"It is a fine thing to meet a real Trehanna again, Squire, one of the old breed. We thought it was extinct pretty much, and that the last of you was just a foreigner with a clever pen. My father used to say that Squire Harry Trehanna—that's your great-grandfather, sir—was the wittiest man in these parts; that he knew every foot of land, every face, and every joke in the parish. He was a keen old Tory too, but a bit too free with his money like many another. I hope you are going to stay in the old place, Squire, and not shut it up again."

"I hope so, Sir Lionel. I am going to do my best."

Sir Lionel went on, turning to his hostess, to comment on the fact of so many old families deserting their ancient

seats, and going abroad, like the Fortescues, from that very house—adding gallantly that this summer they had benefited by the change.

Meanwhile Miss Vaughan said in a low tone to Michael:

“Sir Lionel Wearne is a great admirer of Barbara’s. He has often seen her with me.”

Lady Branscombe, in answer to Sir Lionel’s speech, said that she thought Cornwall, and especially this part of it, the most charming county she had ever been in, and could not understand how any one could possibly leave a Cornish home when he had a chance to stay in it.

“Like our friend Trehanna here, eh, Lady Branscombe? Young men get restless, you know—want tying down. Bind them with the chains of matrimony, eh? Best way I know of—ha, ha!”

Michael Trehanna heard, and turned to him.

“A capital precaution against vagabondage, Sir Lionel. I mean to try it, with the help of a young lady of your acquaintance,” and he smiled as he made the announcement in a tone that was distinctly heard by his neighbors.

Lady Branscombe flushed and trembled, and glanced up half frightened at Michael’s effrontery. Was he taking her consent so for granted?

“Very glad to hear it, Squire,” said the old gentleman. “A lady of my acquaintance, now. I wonder who that can be, eh? There are not so many hereabouts as there were when I was a young man.”

“I think you know my cousin, Barbara Trehanna, Sir Lionel?”

“Miss Barbara—why, of course. Poor Captain Sydney’s daughter. Capital! Capital! A most lovely girl, sir. My best wishes. What do you say to it, Miss Vaughan, eh?” and the old gentleman turned to the vicar’s sister with the liveliest interest.

"I am exceeding glad, Sir Lionel; I think that Barbara will make a very good wife."

The blood had rushed to Laura Branscombe's face till she felt stunned and blind, and receded just as rapidly, leaving her very pale. Half consciously she lifted her wine-glass, and swallowed its contents. Michael's careless eyes scanned her face coldly, and passed on to Miss Griffith, who, seated between the doctor and Sir Lionel, had listened in speechless astonishment.

The dessert was on the table, and Sir Lionel lifted his glass, saying:

"It is old-fashioned now, I believe, but in my younger days we should all have drunk health to the bride, Mrs. Trehanna."

"I shall be delighted to follow such a good custom on such an occasion; the fashion may be old, but the lady is young," said Dr. Reade. "Mr. Vaughan, I am sure you will join us."

"With great pleasure." And so it went round the table, and Lady Branscombe, as hostess, could do no other than lift her wine-glass to her lips, while she would have liked to dash it in Michael's face.

"We must indeed congratulate you, Mr. Trehanna," she said, with a smile which looked like a grimace. "You are to have a bride, I hear, of truly remarkable attractions."

"Thank you, Lady Branscombe," said Michael, with a slight inclination of the head, triumph dancing in his eyes, and a satisfied smile on his lips. "It is so pleasant to hear that she is appreciated."

"Did you know of this, Hess?" whispered Arthur Trehanna fiercely, as he handed his sister some fruit.

"Not a syllable," said Hester, as plainly with her rounded eyes as with her lips.

A glance from Lady Branscombe round the table, and the ladies rose—Michael, tall, smiling, deferential, holding the door for them as they passed.

Arthur Trehanna was not in the sweetest of tempers, though he might certainly have been thankful to get a formidable rival for the hand of Lady Branscombe out of the way. He had been haunting the beach or the farm of Penlooe, and though it had never occurred to him that he (Arthur Trehanna, his father's only son) should marry this Cornish beauty, cousin or no cousin, he was as angry at Michael as a schoolboy who sees a ripe peach snatched from him before he has had time to try its flavor. And for Michael to marry her, too, when he was almost ready for the Bankruptcy Court!

Presently, while the elder gentlemen discussed a Parliamentary question, he carried his wine-glass up to where Michael was sitting and attacked him:

“I say, Michael, what new move is this?”

“Looks like six feet from the bottom of the table to this.”

“Bosh! I mean this news of yours.”

“Oh, my marriage?”

“Yes.”

“Well, what of it?”

“Rather sudden, isn't it? We all thought you were going in for the widow.”

“How could you think I would take her away from you, old man?”

“Well, her income would go far to set Trehanna on its legs again.”

“And keep me on my knees at Trehanna. No; it would be cruel to take the fruits of her bargain from her. She has sold herself, and has got the price. As I was not a partner in the sale, I don't feel entitled to a share of the profits.”

"Well, if you prefer a penniless girl, it is your own lookout, of course. It is no business of mine, I suppose. Only if you are going to throw up Trehanna you might let me know, so that it shouldn't go out of the family."

"I will, my son. But you are making a little mistake in imagining that I am so blinded by the lady's charms as to be temporarily bereft of my senses. I have very solid reasons for what I am doing, as solid as Trehanna itself, which I hope will not pass out of my hands just yet."

"Do you mean that the girl has money?"

"Not so loud, man!—you don't expect me to discuss my bride's expectations with the *whole* table. Yes, she has money."

"Where on earth . . ."

"Look here—you don't want to marry her, I suppose, so why this sudden interest in my proceedings?"

"Oh, of course, I'll shut up; only if you are just going to make a mess of things to spite Lady B. it seems a pity."

"You can console her, and both of you save up your pennies to buy Trehanna when the crash comes." And with a mocking laugh which did not endear him to his cousin, Michael turned away.

The whole conversation had been carried on in low tones, so as not to reach the ears of the politicians at the other end of the table; and Michael approached Mr. Vaughan, with a request for a few words presently, and left Arthur to his reflections.

Now Laura, Lady Branscombe, was not a good-tempered woman. Charming as she was, she had her little weaknesses, and it is no wonder that this evening it took her all her self-control to fill her place as hostess.

As long as she sat at table she held out; but arrived in the drawing-room, the ladies missed her, and Hester, with a pretty quick perception of what was wrong, quietly took her place for a while, though she could not help wondering whether a longer stay of Trehannas in Porthrhyn would be advisable. She knew Laura of old.

But she would scarcely have recognized the little fury who, locking and double-locking her bedroom door, rushed up and down inside it in a paroxysm of rage, her lips muttering, her breast heaving, her whole frame shaking with anger, which presently vented itself in a storm of furious sobbing. She buried her face in the pillows of her bed to stifle the sound, then starting up, with glittering eyes, began her frantic walk again.

"How they fooled me, the whole false gang of them! What did I have that girl and brother here all this time for, if I got no nearer him? The fool, the idiot, to marry that red-haired fisherwoman! What did that old hypocrite mean by what she told me? He was to answer me himself, and *this* is the answer. This! Oh, if I could only get a few little debts of his in my hands, how I would sell up his hateful Trehanna! This is his answer to my generous offer to help him! It is his revenge—just revenge. He wants to serve me as I served him; and this is how he has done it—with a slap in the face before a whole roomful. But something must have angered him freshly. That old fool of a lying saint must have muddled things. Call that creature lovely? Faugh! a scalyfish-woman, with red hair—a great hulking awkward country lout. And Michael Trehanna. It's impossible! Ah, they're not married yet! Wait—wait!"

Little by little she quieted herself—then, turning to a pretty gilded leather case, she produced a handsome bottle of liqueur, and a glass which she filled more than

once—then a perfumed bonbon to disguise the scent, a cooling lotion to her eyes and cheeks, and soon after Lady Branscombe returned to her guests, followed by her maid with an armful of pretty things, curiosities which she had been to fetch.

CHAPTER X

B ARBARA was waiting for Miss Vaughan on Penlooe Beach next day, as the latter arrived for the expedition to Trehanna.

"You are not looking well, Barbie," was her salutation.

"Oh, I'm quite well, thank you, godmother—just a slight headache, perhaps."

"Well, I suppose we must excuse headaches under the circumstances," said Miss Vaughan. "So you two have put your heads together to surprise everybody."

"I thought you knew all about it, godmother."

"All about it? No—I knew there was something in the air, but I did not think Squire Michael would be such an impatient lover. And such a jubilant one! He was quite transformed last night at Porthrbyn, and the reserved Michael Trehanna proclaimed his engagement to the world in general, and your health was drunk by the whole company." Barbara looked at her with wide-open eyes; but was silent. "And he got hold of the vicar privately to find out the shortest possible time in which a marriage could be performed after due notice given by two people residing in this parish."

"Yes? Well, he wishes it all settled as soon as may be."

"But, my dear child, how about your marriage outfit, and all that? There is so much to think of."

"Never mind, godmother! We'll get it afterwards—when Trehanna takes the lead in the countryside and I am a great lady."

She spoke so bitterly that Miss Vaughan looked at her closely.

"Barbie dear, if this engagement does not make you happy, it will be the gravest mistake you ever made. Don't go on with it unless you are very sure. You know, dear, that Father David and I would never encourage it if you were to be sacrificed in any way."

"You are a dear little godmother," said her tall god-child, looking down at her with the loveliest smile. "You and Father David have spoiled me entirely, you know, so that I have moods and tempers which will rather astonish the Squire. But, in spite of them, I am very much in earnest in this—engagement. Whatever you think or see, don't ever suppose that I have not well thought it out before deciding. Now, are we ready? I think I see him on the other side, waiting."

"Well, I suppose no one can understand lovers," said Miss Vaughan, lightly stepping into the boat and taking the tiller-ropes.

As Barbara bent to the oars, Miss Vaughan said:

"How gorgeous we are in millinery to-day! Is that a new hat for the occasion?"

"Great swell, isn't it?" said Barbara, laughing. "I trimmed it this morning, to mother's speechless horror. She confided in my honesty a day or two ago and handed the Indian silk over to my keeping, and you know there is far too much for a dress—even if I had a train to it six yards long—so I cut off a little piece to trim my hat with. I was only forgiven because I am going away so soon."

"And is that to be the wedding dress, after all?"

"Oh dear, no! The wedding is to be a sort of unexpected incident in a morning walk. Don't you remember the man who said, 'Oh, here's a church; let's go in,' and so on?"

The boat was turning towards the shore, and presently a figure was visible upon the broken landing-place.

Michael Trehanna greeted the ladies cheerfully and helped them out. The "jubilant lover" had become far more matter-of-fact.

Miss Vaughan hastened up the steps above to leave the lovers undisturbed; but she only heard Barbara say, as she stood on the steps:

"This is the first time I put foot on Trehanna proper."

"Is it indeed?" said Squire Michael; and the two overtook Miss Vaughan, walking one on each side of her. "I am sorry to say," said the Squire, "that my aunt is in bed, unable to do the honors. She has been in bed all day, but scorns the idea of a doctor, so Priscilla says."

"So sorry," murmured Miss Vaughan mendaciously. "I hope it won't be much. Something at dinner yesterday upset her, perhaps."

"Very likely," said Michael grimly. "I believe she suffers from bilious attacks. Now, shall we have tea first and inspect the house afterwards, or *vice versa?*"

"Oh, the house first," said Barbara.

And so it was.

Michael talked pleasantly enough to the two ladies as they entered the great hall with its lofty roof and oaken paneling, but Barbara never spoke. She looked at the wide empty hearth below the massive carving of the chimney-piece and the "Trove Trehanna" carved on a great scroll, and put her hand thoughtfully on an ancient leather chair, her brow knitted as though trying to remember something—but she said nothing.

They passed through a long suite of dusty reception-rooms, then empty bedrooms, and then up the great black staircase to the long gallery.

"Now, this should interest Barbara, by all accounts,"

said Miss Vaughan. "It is a long time since I have been in this gallery, very long—but here should be the portrait of the famous Dame Gillian."

They walked up the long echoing room between rows of ancient portraits to the center, and there, life-size, stood a picture which took the spectator's eye at once.

Before a background of dense leafy shade stood a white figure dressed in shining satin. The head was slightly turned, and the brown eyes looked half-proudly, half-mockingly straight into those of the spectator. The level brows, the proud poise of the head on a gleaming white throat, and the glittering shower of hair which fell in parted tresses far down upon the satin train gave a certain individuality to the picture, marking it out from the plumed and simpering dames upon the walls around. But that was not all. There was something in the eyes—a curious living, watchful look, which seemed almost to return the beholder's gaze and fascinate it.

Miss Vaughan turned round, as they all stood silent before the picture.

"Take off your hat, Barbie," she said.

Barbara was very pale, but did so silently.

Stepping back that Barbara might front the picture alone, Miss Vaughan said to the Squire:

"Look!"

He looked from Barbara to the picture and back again. She glanced round at Michael, and the accidental turn of the head and questioning look in the eyes made the resemblance so extraordinary that one of those breathless pauses ensued which precede some great event.

Nothing happened, however, except that Michael, feeling himself looked through on both sides with the same half-proud, half-mocking brown eyes, and smiled at by the same dimpled mouth, stepped back with a smothered exclama-

tion. Shaking off some passing feeling at once, however, he said, laughing:

"It is quite uncanny, Barbara, to be your own great-grandmother in the tenth degree."

Barbara looked back at her ancestress critically.

"Father David was right," she said; "I am Gill Redhead the Second." And before Michael could enter any polite disallowance of the term, she continued, pointing to a portrait next to Dame Gillian's, "Who is that?"

"Ah, that is Sir Bevill," said Michael. "I am afraid he was a bad lot, from what I have heard. Just as well, Barbara, that he was not descended to this generation, like his wife. Ah, excuse me a moment," as the servant came forward with a letter. "May I leave you for a few moments to explore? I must speak to the bearer of this."

He was gone in a moment; and Barbara, turning to Miss Vaughan, said, pointing to the portrait of Sir Bevill:

"That is the man, in my dreams, who wanted the red book, but he has no scar just here"—and she pointed to her own cheek.

"Ah well, then, that accounts for your dreaming of him; for there is probably a copy of this picture somewhere which you may have seen as a child." And Miss Vaughan moved away, partly because she did not believe her own words, and partly because she was angry with herself for not believing them.

Barbara remained where she was, and Miss Vaughan, looking round, presently beheld her, with clasped hands and wistful eager eyes, steadfastly staring at some picture on the farther side of Dame Gillian. Barbara was so entirely absorbed in her gaze and oblivious of everything else that she did not hear Miss Vaughan's question as she drew nearer to see what so interested her godchild.

It was the portrait of a boy of eight or ten years of

age; the face full of eager life, the plumed hat in one hand, the whip in the other—the whole attitude expressive of the fact that he had been arrested in some boyish frolic and put upon canvas while eager to be gone.

"Who is it, Barbara?" asked Miss Vaughan.

Barbara's lips moved, but she did not answer. Presently she gave a long, painful sigh, and, turning with bent head, walked down the whole length of the gallery from where she had stood to a door at the other end. This she opened without hesitation, but slowly as one in deep thought, crossed a little vestibule where there were several doors, and made straight for one on the right-hand side, which she entered as though she were accustomed to go in and out twenty times a day. And here Miss Vaughan, following, found her.

The room was hung with faded tapestry. On one side stood a large four-post bed without hangings, the wooden posts carved and inlaid with tarnished silver. There were one or two chairs, and on the wall a blackened mirror in a metal frame which might once have been silver. The whole room looked indescribably forlorn.

Barbara was standing, leaning against the ancient bed, her whole face drawn into an extraordinary expression of age and sorrow. She sighed, as though oppressed and struggling with some strange nightmare.

Miss Vaughan came up to her.

"Child, what is wrong?" she said.

Barbara put up one hand as though to check her, but did not answer.

Miss Vaughan seated herself beside Barbara on the bed and waited.

Presently the girl raised her head, sighing again, and began to move away.

"Does your head still ache, dear?" asked Miss Vaughan.

"Yes, I think," said Barbara wearily, as she seated herself in a chair near the window.

"Take off your hat—why did you put it on again?—and I will open the window and get some air."

But it was a very large window—a tall lozenged casement set deep into the wall,—and it resisted Miss Vaughan's efforts.

"Pull the bolt," said Barbara, and, coming to her aid, put her hand upon a carved knob, turning it in an unexpected way, and the window opened easily. It looked into the great quadrangle of the house over a wooden gallery.

"You seem to know about this kind of fastening; I never saw it before," said Miss Vaughan.

"Yes," said Barbara, and, dropping into her chair, again began to take off her hat.

Miss Vaughan was thoroughly puzzled by the girl's manner. That she was not affecting a humor she did not feel was evident enough from her appearance; for Miss Vaughan had never seen a face alter as Barbara's had done in the last quarter of an hour. An unexplainable look of absolute age and care had passed over it.

"Child," said Miss Vaughan, "I think you ought to tell me what is the matter."

Barbara looked at her wistfully for a moment, passing her hand across her forehead hastily as she did so.

"No," she said; "I don't see how I can. I can't explain—what I can't understand. There's no sense in it."

"But you are certainly suffering in some way."

Barbara tossed the hat from her with an impatient gesture. It had been on her lap.

"That scent makes me sick," she said.

Miss Vaughan took up the hat, examined the trimming, lifted it to her nose.

"I don't detect the faintest odor," she said. "But it is beautiful silk, like rippling water shining in the sun."

Barbara gave a weary little nod, her lips tightening.

Miss Vaughan put the hat back.

"But your senses may be more acute than mine," she continued, "and a perfume may affect you which does not touch me. Come, Barbara, a simple headache would not affect you as something or other seems to have done in the last quarter of an hour. Just tell me what it is. Don't fear my being superior, you know, or demanding more reason than you can give."

A faint smile crossed Barbara's face.

"I have no reason—no reasonable reason at all. I can't make it out. What should these portraits of people who are dead, centuries ago, matter to me? But I know them like—like my own hand. Little Philip, with his bright eyes and dear little eager face. I began to ache with pity for him, I remembered so well how he stood for his picture—but how could I? I got a strange weight of worry and tiredness, and I came back here without thinking where I was going, but remembering back, and back, all the time, till I felt dazed and stupid. I felt so old—as if a whole life lay behind me—as if there were no spring more in me. A curious horror of a light comes aching into my head, and by that light I see the pictures of what happened in Trehanna when—when those portraits were alive."

She was silent, looking miserably, hopelessly at Miss Vaughan.

That lady, besides her common sense, had, fortunately for her godchild, a power of sympathy and tact rarely excelled. She nodded her head quietly.

"It is a curious mental experience, dear, but I wouldn't worry about its being reasonable or possible. You just feel it, so it is there. I dare say scientific people would

find some name for it. But tell me more exactly. It is a sort of memory—dream?"

"Yes, memory," said Barbara. "As clearly as I remember playing in the Vicarage garden when I was a little child, and eating a forbidden strawberry, and wiping my red fingers on my pinafore as you came towards me—as clearly as that, *I* remember standing in that long gallery, ages ago, when they brought little Philip, dead, past his own picture, and laid him in that room beyond, and it was I who cried and wailed, or—was it *I*?—came to this room—this very room." And her voice died away in an effort to remember.

Miss Vaughan was silent, wondering.

"But these memories come only at times," said Barbara. "Something seems to send light, as I said, and then I remember things I did not know before. That is the trouble—how can I remember? They must be dreams, or ideas that crowd into my brain, and—and—sane, healthy people don't have such things, or I would not mind. But I cannot account for these hallucinations. The theory of Betsey Truscoe won't hold."

"You speak of hallucinations," began Miss Vaughan.

"It was the wrong word," cried Barbara, springing up. "A hallucination is a delusion. Look here at this room! I was never here before, but I know it—oh, by heart. How can I prove it? That window I showed you how to open. I know how every article of furniture was placed; if I could find them, I could put them back one by one. Behind the bed is a small cupboard in the arras, with two doors locking in the middle—see if I can find it."

The bed, dismantled of its hangings, stood against the wall in the only place in the room where it could stand without blocking a door or a window. Barbara knelt upon

it, and between two posts at the head turned back a piece of the wall tapestry and exposed, all blackened with age and draped with cobwebs, the double doors of which she had spoken.

Miss Vaughan turned pale, and her breath came quicker. Barbara fell on her knees at her godmother's side.

"Oh, godmother! You see—it is no dream—I am not going wrong in my head—what is it? Could old Betsey have told me that?"

Miss Vaughan took the girl's trembling hands and said as calmly as she could:

"It startles you—and me; but, dear, I have heard of such things. I never had to do with clairvoyance before, but I really think this must be something like it. Of course you know, or have read, of abnormally sensitive persons being able to read the history of the events which have passed between the four walls in which they find themselves."

"Clairvoyance!" cried Barbara, her eyes opening to take in a new thought, and a half-look of relief stealing over her. "But, you know, I always thought of this kind of thing as a mixture of hysteria and lies. Surely it is a sort of subversion of the senses. Can a sane, practical girl be a clairvoyant?"

Now, Miss Vaughan's opinion had hitherto been almost identical with that of Barbara, but her mind took an enforced leap to meet the emergency.

"I have heard of many otherwise quiet, every-day sort of people being gifted with second sight, or clairvoyance. It is an old thing newly studied just now—just an added power to the mind, if one does not rush to the conviction that one is abnormally gifted, and therefore pose as a sibyl or a prophet. I think that your naturally truthful, practical nature should save you from anything hysterical

or false. You have just an added power, perhaps, and must use it sensibly."

"You may be right," said Barbara; "I hope you are. Though the idea is hateful to me, somehow, yet it is blessed sunshine after the horrible doubts which have plagued me lately as to my sanity. I think the fear of going mad is the most horrible torture possible."

"Child, keep your thoughts from going in that direction," said Miss Vaughan, her voice vibrating with emotion. "God in His mercy preserve you from such a thing. Try, rather, to reduce your new discovery of power to some law or other. I know too little to make suggestions; but you know that in the Highlands, and in pure Celtic families second sight is as natural in some of the members as a taste for music or a fine voice."

"Of course—of course one knows all that, but one does not really take it as actual truth. To me it has seemed lately as if some power in my head gave me instantaneous photographs of things gone by—but memory does that, too, you know."

"What things especially? Only at Trehanna?"

"No-o . . . yes. I am not sure. I must think and remember, and find out what brings out this queer power—or sight." She avoided the word clairvoyance, as though inwardly rebelling against it. "And, godmother, you won't—nobody must know this. Dear, promise, please."

"Of course not, child—the idea! But we must think, too, if you should become an inmate of a place so connected with these sad thoughts and—memories, as you call them."

"No need to think twice," said the girl, her lips closing in a firm line again as she rose to her feet. "This is my place—my own place—where I can work for Trehanna and even this very—power—may help me in it."

"Well then, dear, we must judge accordingly."

They heard the sound of steps along the corridor, and the door opened and Michael Trehanna appeared.

"Here you are at last. I've been all through the library, chapel, knights' hall, and Heaven knows where else to search for you. How did you find Dame Gillian's room?"

"Was this her room?" asked Miss Vaughan, while Barbara looked at him in breathless interest.

"I believe so. Looks dismal enough now, doesn't it? Nothing here of interest. There is a room on the other side, called the music-room, with curious old instruments in it—lutes and virginals and things. Shall we go and look at it?"

"First," said Barbara, in a low voice, "it would be as well, perhaps, to settle about this room. May I have it when I come to Trehanna?"

"This desolate-looking garret?"

"It is not at all a garret. It is large and light, and though it is on the second story I am pretty sure that it is in a capital position. See where it looks out over the whole court and away to the hills behind, and here is a wooden balcony going down by a wooden stair. And here," opening another door, "is the front room looking out over the sea. I am pretty sure that a housekeeper, such as Dame Gillian is said to have been, would be where she could have her eyes on her stores and her servants as well. May I look?"

"Just as you like," said Michael, with a shrug. "I don't know much of this part of the house. I thought it was pretty much given up to servants and cupboards."

It was soon discovered that beyond Dame Gillian's rooms, running into the side wing, were smaller rooms, which were promptly named by Barbara as dressing-room, maid's-room, keeping-room, and what not.

There was no doubt that the gigantic butteries, still-

rooms, etc., on that side of the house corroborated Barbara's surmise as to Dame Gillian's housewifely eye being upon her surroundings.

"So this is your choice, Barbara?" said Michael at length.

"Yes, if you will allow it."

"Well, if you find it dismal and inconvenient you can always change it. You are certainly autocrat of all the Russias up here, so no one can forbid your choosing Siberia for your royal residence."

He spoke coolly, thought Miss Vaughan, and he did not say "we." It was the language of entire surrender of his own wishes to her, or of complete indifference, as of a thing which involved no taste or liking on his own part.

"We have not seen your rooms, Squire Michael," said Miss Vaughan, smiling.

A dark flush burnt on his cheek as his eyes sought Barbara's for an instant.

"Mine? Oh, I have just been content with the old room I had when I was a youngster. I don't think it is fit to be seen."

An explanation of the sort of contract into which she was about to enter with Michael Trehanna under the title of marriage was not the kind of thing Barbara wished to lay before Miss Vaughan—at any rate, yet. She said:

"There will have to be a grand house-cleaning, and there is no one to undertake it till I can look after it, as Miss Griffith is so delicate; and I could not very well come to and fro before—before—"

"Before you are legally entitled *Dame* Barbara," said Michael, coming to her aid. "Suppose we had the blue room downstairs—a comparatively modern sort of place, which is furnished a little more up to date—put in order

for the time, till you can get this side of the house arranged according to your own liking?"

"A very good idea, I think," said Miss Vaughan, quite relieved to see what she supposed a more natural tone between the lovers. "Let us go and see it—shall we? And then," she continued, talking as she went, "we must get one or two thoroughly good servants, and, with Barbara's housewifeship, Trehanna will be transformed."

And so it was arranged, and Michael was satisfied that the eminently practical knowledge which his future bride showed in domestic matters when work and workers were discussed was the best surety that he might soon get release from the galling cares of Trehanna life, and be off to the greater freedom of camp life and the friendship of men of his own kind.

CHAPTER XI

MISS GRIFFITH'S health continued to disable her for the least exertion. She had so far overcome her weakness as to reach her drawing-room and send for Michael, and while weeping over him, and promising to pray Heaven for his deliverance from the snare of the wicked, had solemnly appealed to him to withdraw from the degradation of this marriage before all his friends forsook him.

Michael, however, was obdurate, and could only be brought to inquire whether Aunt Eliza intended to withdraw.

As it would not have suited her plans to abdicate unconditionally in this way, she said that her grave was her only remaining refuge; and that she did not think that after so many years of devoted care of her poor departed sister's children, she should be turned out into this bleak world to die like a dog. Doubtless she had deserved this—she ought to count such trials all joy—but flesh was weak, and she was frail, and so on, until her nephew, sick of the scene, told her that Trehanna was quite big enough for them all, and if she could make herself happy in the room which had been hers until now, good and well, but she must allow him to be master in his own house, and to marry to please himself.

So a hollow peace was patched up. But Miss Griffith's health continued to be too delicate for her to go out,

either to call on Lady Branscombe or to pay a visit to her nephew's betrothed. He had suggested this latter course to her, but did not insist, and as much as possible avoided any thought of her part or interest in his married life.

Of course he was bound to provide for her; and after all, as he intended to be very little at Trehanna himself, it was as well, for the sake of appearances, that so young a wife as Barbara should not be quite alone.

As Miss Griffith was so unwell, he took her excuses when he went to make his duty call at Porthrbyn after the dinner.

Meanwhile Arthur Trehanna found existence at Porthrbyn very trying. To command his own temper while his thoughts gloated over the lost beauties of Barbara, and while Lady Branscombe demanded extra attention to feed a mortified vanity, was difficult; and he escaped as often as he could and engaged in a fruitless endeavor to find Barbara alone on the beach or in the fields, without calling on her.

At last he succeeded. She was on the beach with a curious scientific kind of book on the laws of Psychology.

"How do you do, Barbara? What an age it is since I saw you last!"

"Nearly a week?"

"Nearer a month, I should think. Ever since you sprung that surprise on everybody."

"Whose calendar do you use? And where is Hester?"

"Hester is at home with Lady Branscombe, dutifully receiving company, among whom is some one I saw on the road. Who should you think?"

"How should I know Lady Branscombe's friends? They are not mine."

"Ain't they? By Jove! You'd have thought they were,

then, if you had heard them the other night when your health was drunk."

Barbara flushed. "Silly kind of thing," she said. "That is not a proof of friendship, and my lady does not love me."

"Well, y' know, you could scarcely expect it. I never heard yet of a woman who loved another that had cut her out."

Barbara pricked up her ears, but would ask no question.

"So you don't know who has gone up there this afternoon?" said Arthur.

"Michael?"

"Oh, of course, he will have told you he was going. Did he ask permission to visit his old love?"

"Why should he?"

"Oh, judging by his state of slavery long ago, you know, I thought he might have fallen back into the same kind of thing—just changing owner. Lord! what a state of abject spoons he was in then! He will be your bond-slave now, I suppose?"

"Thank you," said Barbara, with a curl of the lip. "I should not feel proud of a man who could make himself contemptible either for my sake or anybody else's."

"Then *you're* not in love. A girl when she is in love prizes the proof of the man's subjection beyond any earthly thing. The bigger fool he is, the greater her conquest."

"Is that your experience?"

"No, that's the result of a life of philosophy."

"Not yours, then?"

"Yes, of course. I've taken notes of cases."

"Well, your notes were wrong, then. A love that makes an idiot of a man would disgust a girl that has a decent character, and the more she loved him the less she'd like

to see him an abject slave. Do you mean to say you don't know that? Why, if ever you see a man making an utter fool of himself, and becoming a dog to fetch and carry, and have favors flung to him as if they were a bone to be watched for, you may be sure that the girl is a selfish, shallow creature, with no capacity for honest love in her."

"Bravo, Barbara! Is that a hit at the fair widow?"

"It doesn't hit anybody that I know. But, of course, there's a good deal of vanity going about under the name of love."

"Is that why she flung over poor old Michael for Sir Thomas? Just kicked him off like an old shoe, ye know."

"How would you like your hostess to hear you talk that way, sir?"

"Are you going up to Porthrbyn to tell her?"

"Probably."

"Hum. Her temper is not of the very sweetest just now, any way, so your communication will be well received, and I shall depart. No wonder she's cross, though. Awful slap in the face Michael gave her, announcing his engagement at her own dinner-table before everybody. Tit for tat, I suppose."

Barbara held her peace—she *would* not ask questions

"Don't you think so yourself?"

Arthur Trehanna was determined to find out if this engagement was based on love on her side. It was not love with Michael, that he was sure—not even that intoxication of the senses which Arthur Trehanna himself might have considered natural.

"Think what?" asked Barbara.

"Well, that Michael had arranged a very pretty little comedy of revenge? It is quite true that she had carried

on the very tallest kind of flirtation with that beast of a Branscombe under Michael's very nose, and the fellow never saw it. He was slaving away to earn twopence half-penny a year to get married on, and live happy for ever in a Putney villa. And then one fine morning he got a note saying she was sorry not to oblige him with a wife just then, but she happened to prefer Sir Thomas Branscombe, and she did marry Branscombe two days after. But of course this is an old story to you."

"Your way of putting it, at all events, is new and sympathetic. But as he is your cousin, and my promised husband, I think we will change the subject."

"You take things pretty coolly. Have you any heart at all, Barbara?"

"Perhaps I have about as much as the usual Trehanna allowance. You don't find yourself inconvenienced by any abnormal growth of that organ, do you?"

"Come, you know—you needn't chaff. If you take to that kind of thing I'd better go. I shall be off to town soon, anyway."

"And Hester, too?" asked Barbara, her face changing.

"That's all you care, though I go to-morrow. You want Hester for a bridesmaid, I suppose. She told me to ask you."

"Oh, thank you—her I mean. But I am not going to have any bridesmaids."

"No bridesmaids? Why, how will you do without? Is the whole thing a hoax?"

"The wedding will be very quiet—when it is. No fuss at all."

"There's something queer about it all, seems to me. You're an awful queer girl in one way, Barbara. But it seems such rot to go and fling yourself away on that fellow. Why, you know you might marry anybody.

Honor bright, I don't know a girl that can hold a candle to you. I never saw such a lovely girl all my life, and that's a fact. I had no idea of this kind of thing with Michael, and I thought I might have a chance, and this thing came all of a sudden, and regularly knocked me over. You don't know how you've been in my head, night and day, night and day, since that first time I saw you. But I suppose you just despise love, and all that kind of thing, or you might have a kind word for a fellow."

Barbara was mute with astonishment.

"Look here, darling," he went on persuasively. "What's the good of your pretending to care for that fellow; you don't take me in any more than he did. I know he does not love you as you ought to be loved. He could make a fool of himself for a wax doll; and for a splendid creature like you are he is as dry as a stick. You don't know what love is, my beauty, you—"

"Stop, sir!" cried Barbara, springing to her feet, the fire behind those brown eyes kindled at last to a blaze. "How dare you say such things of me? What have you to do with the love between Michael and me? If I don't know what love means, I know what honor is, and that is a thing you don't begin to understand. I've heard enough of your treachery. Good-by to you!" and in a moment she had sprung up the rocks, threading the steep path to the Penlooe garden, and was gone.

"Damnation!" said Arthur Trehanna, thrusting his hands in his pockets and with lowered head frowning after her.

On the other side of the bay, among the old elms of Trehanna, a figure had been walking in the shade. The abrupt parting, and Barbara's sudden change of attitude and flight, and the sullen bowed head and slow step of Arthur, had made an eloquent little scene.

"Ah," said the Squire, "a lover come too late! Was it anger or despair which drove the fair one away? Does she wish to change? But he can't make her Mrs. Trehanna of Trehanna, I suppose. Am I to be thankful that I can?"

CHAPTER XII

MISS GRIFFITH had taken to the writing of notes. She was still too ill to go out, she said, but not too ill to write and receive letters from Lady Branscombe; or to see that lady herself, when Michael was not at home.

And just now the Squire was absent a good deal. He sometimes had to calculate time and conveyance to one place, sometimes to another; and workmen were going about stables, and cow-houses, and outbuildings of all sorts.

The low of cattle was heard from the farm buildings, which ran along forming a second court beyond the stately quadrangle of the house; and Lady Branscombe declared that she had seen a carriage-house open, on one of her drives through Trehanna, and a carriage with the Trehanna arms on it being overhauled.

"But since that day, soon after the dinner-party, not one word has he spoken of his marriage, or of the girl Cardew," said Miss Griffith. "If it were not for the designing father I don't believe anything would come of the engagement. He does not go there (that I can find out) and she does not come here."

"I am convinced that it is just a patched-up thing, arranged in a hurry," said Lady Branscombe. "A piece of revenge. Poor fellow! it shows how deeply he still feels what he must have thought my inconstancy. If he knew

what I had to suffer between my father's entreaties and my own heart's desires!"

This was true. But she omitted to explain that her father was heartily ashamed of her treatment of young Trehanna, and had used his influence against, and not for, her marriage with Sir Thomas Branscombe.

"Ah, my poor child," sighed Miss Griffith, "how rarely are noble hearts appreciated in this world! Men turn from the priceless treasure of a virgin love to squander their substance upon wantons."

This was in reminiscence of the want of appreciation of her own virgin affection by Sydney Trehanna long ago.

"Do you think that Cardew, that girl's father, has got a hold of Michael any way through the estate?" asked Lady Branscombe.

"I should think it very likely indeed. He has farmed a great deal of Trehanna land for a long time. A most intrusive, impertinent man! It was as much as I could do to keep him from coming here to give me the benefit of his orders and advice. But I did keep him out until Michael came, and then he triumphed. I believe he has Michael completely under his thumb."

"Mercenary wretch! So now he will put his daughter in, to insure his hold. Do you believe she is anything else?"

"I never believed she was anything but a Cardew. Do you think that the widow of Sydney Trehanna, if she had really been so, would have stooped to marry a common farmer?"

"Of course not."

"Oh, it was just a scheme of that man Cardew to get poor Sydney's money. He brought the creatures here, pretending they were Trehannas, and when he found he could not foist the woman on any one else he married her himself, as he ought to have done years before. The girl

is probably not even legitimately a Cardew. The mother was just one of those common creatures who follow a regiment."

"Good gracious! How credulous Michael must be to be taken in like that! But you know everybody calls her Trehanna."

"I don't know everybody, my dear. In this house she was never called so."

"How came the Vaughans to take her up?"

"Oh, Miss Vaughan had tried hard to catch Sydney Trehanna before he left home. In fact, she got herself talked about, and then there was a mysterious absence from home for a while on her side, and Sydney's father was very angry at the scandal in the parish, and actually turned his son out of doors. It would be very sad to take away a woman's good name, my dear, so let us draw a veil over that part. But Cardew, when he brought home this woman and her child, got hold of Miss Vaughan as a likely person to help in trying to get poor Sydney's money, and they christened the child Barbara after Miss Vaughan."

"Dear me, what a web of intrigue!"

"You may well say so," sighed Miss Griffith, quite breathed by the mental gymnastics required to arrange her facts. "Really, country places seem so innocent until you know the depravity of the human heart, and then they are worse than a great town very often."

"But, Miss Griffith, have you ever seen the great hulking fisherwoman who calls herself Barbara Trehanna?"

"I cannot say I have, my dear. I was far too upset to receive those designing creatures when Michael brought them here. She never set foot in this house before."

"Arthur and Hester Trehanna would make me believe that she is quite educated, because she has learned a few phrases of a French vocabulary. Really, these red-haired

women have some horrible sexual attraction for men. I have often heard it, but I never really believed it before. She is immense. A sort of ton of freckled flesh, and goes about with a great coarse rope of that hideous hair hanging down her back."

"And *that* is the bride of the proudest Trehanna that ever stepped; for Michael is an aristocrat to his finger-tips in some things. Have you ever noticed his profile? So clear-cut. Just like his dear mother's. She was a real Griffith, you know. It seems such a profanation."

"But can you do nothing?"

"I have wept and prayed for the poor misguided man. I implored him to think, but he was flint to entreaties."

"You old idiot," thought Lady Branscombe, "you'll aggravate the man into marrying all the quicker."

Aloud she remarked:

"He is not the kind of man to take words of warning from his own friends. He is very obstinate, you know. If we only knew some outsider who could put the thing before him as the world sees it."

"But who could do it?" sighed Miss Griffith dolefully.

"Have you ever heard anything about the girl's behavior? Does she take after her mother?"

"Oh, I really don't know, my dear. My thoughts have fed upon far higher and sweeter themes, and often this trivial gossip of a dying world passes through my weary brain, and leaves no trace behind."

"Poor dear, you have suffered so much," remarked Lady Branscombe aloud; while inwardly she exclaimed: "Tiresome old hypocrite, I wish she'd speak out."

"Old Mary Trudgeon used to say that the young Twalmouth farmers ran after her red head," sighed Miss Griffith; "and at one time I heard of young Wearne—and—oh! there were others, I believe."

“Old Mary Trudgeon, who was she?”

“A faithful old servant, my love, who has received the usual reward of this ungrateful world. After fifteen years' service, my nephew dismissed her from this house within a week of his return.”

“How shocking! And she knows about this girl?”

“She used to tell me things, I believe. They said at one time that a Captain Dance, or France, was to marry her the next time he returned from sea.”

“If Michael knew that he was taking a girl who had broken faith with another!” said Lady Branscombe, her pale face lighting up with a peculiarly unpleasant smile.

“Ah,” said Miss Griffith, shaking her head.

“If these things are true he ought to know, but who can tell him?” said Lady Branscombe.

“A judicious letter,” began Miss Griffith.

“Ah—but from whom?”

“From nobody. It might have the Twalmouth post-mark, and it might be—an anonymous, perhaps.” This in a whisper.

“Do you think one could? But would he guess?”

“Let the letter come from the Trudgeons.”

“Ah, or not sign it, but let it bear the resemblance of their speech,” said Lady Branscombe.

“Yes. But you must see Betsey Trudgeon.”

And the conspirators for the good and the enlightenment of Squire Trehanna held such a long sitting on that day that it was twilight before Lady Branscombe reached home.

CHAPTER XIII

“**W**HAT a dreadful noise there is this morning!” said Miss Griffith two days later, as she sat down, soon after nine o’clock, to her chocolate. “Priscilla, I must insist on your keeping quieter until I am up. Your master is not at home to breakfast to-day—that I know,—but since six o’clock the banging and clattering up and down has been dreadful.”

“Please, ma’am, Squire only went out after his breakfast half an hour ago, and he was a-lookin’ after the bringin’ things in and a-settin’ of the new maids to work.”

“What things? What new maids?” said Miss Griffith, setting down her chocolate in a hurry.

“Oh, I thought you knew, ma’am. Master said as he was going up to Carvarron to-day, and you wasn’t a-expeckin’ of him to dinner.”

“Oh, of course; but my head is so very weak that I quite forgot, with so much noise,” said the lady, unwilling to admit that she had not been consulted; and, hastily finishing her breakfast, she went to inspect the new arrivals.

* * * * *

It was a gray, quiet day in July, and a soft haze hung over the full leaf of Trehanna woods as the little vicarage wagonette drove by them up the steep Carvarron road and emerged upon a kind of grassy clearing intersected by paths, and leading to the barer, heather-covered hills above.

Here, in the shade of the firs, stood a small, a very small church, once belonging to Carvarron Castle, whose ruins rose gray and picturesque at a few yards' distance. The church, standing alone, had escaped decay, though the walls, half-encircling it and connecting it with the ancient precincts of the castle, lay in mossy heaps. The door of the church was open, leaving a ray of colored light to fall softly on the broken, mossy steps, and standing just on the threshold was Trehanna of Trehanna, awaiting his bride.

As the vicarage carriage drove up, he came forward and helped Miss Vaughan and Barbara to alight.

The vicar disappeared into the twilight behind the altar, to emerge presently in full canonicals.

Barbara had been met on the threshold by her step-father, who, with his wife, had been seated quietly waiting in the church. On his arm she came up the tiny aisle to meet the bridegroom at the altar. She was very pale; but the purity and freshness of her face and the grave innocence of her large brown eyes were heightened by the extreme simplicity of her dress, which fell in severe unadorned folds of purest white around her figure—a figure with which even the stern eye of the bridegroom could find no fault. A plain small straw hat shaded the brilliant coils of hair, but there was no bud or orange blossom; only at the last moment a tiny spray of white heather had been pushed by Miss Vaughan into her belt.

The bridegroom looked at her composedly as she moved towards him, and both turned to the vicar. As the service proceeded, however, and the fateful words were uttered, "till death do us part," Barbara grew a shade whiter, and lifted her eyes to Michael with a look of startled realization of the nature of the oath—and terror at its weight. His eyes met hers, and it seemed almost as if the words

would be arrested; but the moment passed almost before Mr. Vaughan noticed the break, and in a few minutes more the ceremony was over.

In all Barbara's plans for the future Michael had been the picture on the wall, of some one in the distance. They were to be separated almost at once, so he said, by his return to his post abroad; and now she had just sworn to *love* him till death should part them.

But there was no time for reflection or hesitation. In the little cell of a sacristy close behind, a man was waiting with ink, papers, and a book, and names were signed, and congratulations given.

Presently Barbara felt a slight careless touch of a mustache on her cheek, and knew that she had received her husband's first kiss. She colored hotly and drew back. He calmly put her hand on his arm, and said, in a low tone, as they moved down the aisle:

"An unavoidable ceremony, *not* a precedent."

Miss Vaughan looked at the handsome young pair as they passed her with exultation. How strikingly they suited each other.

Michael's close-cropped, soldierly head overtopped that of his wife by several inches, but any other woman in the neighborhood would not have reached higher than his shoulder. His bronzed, stern-looking features and deeply set blue eyes, below the square broad brow, contrasted in their masculine power with the delicacy of Barbara's coloring, and the veiled softness of her eyes.

The two harmoniously moving figures as they passed out of the church, one now in the eye of the law, did not give the slightest indication of the sudden wild longing to break into freedom—and resentment of the chain which bound them, which was born in Barbara's breast at least. Strange that it never occurred to her before that she was

going to lose her liberty, till her husband had authoritatively placed her hand upon his arm and led her away.

As they came to the door to pass out Michael almost stopped in surprise, for just inside were seated two gentlemen: one with a dark face and white mustache, and the unmistakable bearing of a soldier; the other a much younger man, whose eyes met those of Trehanna with the glance of a friend. Michael inclined his head an instant, went out with Barbara, and leaving her to Miss Vaughan, with a hasty word of apology, turned to meet the gentleman coming out.

"My best congratulations, Trehanna. Good luck to you, old man—though, if my eyes don't deceive me, you've got it already. But who would have thought of you? Never was a man who abominated matrimony like Trehanna. How dost thou, Benedict, the married man?"

"Pretty well, thank you. Very glad to see you, old fellow; but where on earth, or above it, did you come from?"

"Oh, came over for a holiday, seeing that my dad and his regiment are at St. Ulphs just now. Dad—this is Trehanna, friend and comrade of mine with pen and knapsack all through the Soudan; Trehanna, Colonel Mottram."

"It is quite a curious coincidence, Mr. Trehanna," said the Colonel, "that we should arrive here for your wedding. Dick and I came over for a ride to see the ruins, and seeing the church open, walked in. But we must not keep you, unless we might venture to ask an introduction to the bride."

"She will be very happy, I am sure," said Trehanna rather stiffly, causing Dick Mottram to mutter:

"Wants to get rid of us—jealous as Othello. We aren't fit to see her face. *O tempora! O mores!*"

A word to Barbara brought her to where the Mottrams were standing, and again they apologized for their presence.

"But my son, who has joined me only for a short time, told me that he believed Mr. Trehanna lived not very far off, and we were reconnoitering. No good to look for you at home yet though, I suppose. Perhaps you know Sir Lionel Wearne; we thought of hunting him up."

"Of course," said Michael. "He lives about five or six miles on that side; you can almost see his place from here, not quite. But we shall be delighted to see you—ah—soon. I want to know all the latest, Mottram. How's Phelps getting on? I see his script in the *Liar*. How does he hit it off with the other fellows?"

Meanwhile the old Colonel with stately politeness way haranguing Barbara.

"Yes, Trehanna is not a common name, as I told my son when he spoke of your husband; but I knew a man in India, a good many years ago, of the same name. A fine fellow was Sydney Trehanna. He was killed in a brush up country. He may have been a connection of your husband's, Mrs. Trehanna."

"He was my father," said Barbara quietly.

"Your father! My dear young lady, then—then you were the child born scarcely a month before he got his death from those Afghan brutes. How extraordinary! Why, I saw your father married, my—ah—Mrs. Trehanna—well, how time flies! But we must not trespass any longer: I hope we shall meet again. I am delighted to shake hands with your father's daughter, my dear. Good-by." And the old man and his son went towards the place where their horses were tied.

As they stood loosening them, a man came up in an unmistakable countryman's Sunday suit, who touched

his hat and stood to attention as stiffly as if he wore a red coat and a cap.

"Who are you, sir?" asked the Colonel.

"Sergeant Cardew, sir, —th Regiment, Captain Trehanna's company."

"By Jove! So you are, Cardew—I didn't recognize you. After so many years, too. So you knew me?"

"Captain Mottram, sir—knew you directly I set eyes on you, sir."

"Ah, I stuck to my colors, Cardew, and got my step-Colonel Mottram now; and this is my son. Strange thing, by the way. This is the second Trehanna wedding where you and I have been witnesses, Cardew—eh?"

"Come, dad," exclaimed his son, "we are stopping proceedings, I think. You will see them all again soon, I hope."

"Ay, aye, Dick—you live near here, Cardew?".

"Just four miles down, opposite Trehanna, sir; and a proud man I'd be fur to show you my farm, sir."

"All right, Cardew; we'll come some day soon," and they cantered off.

Cardew's face was beaming as he came up to the wedding group.

"There niver could a come nothin' patter nor that, Squire. 'Tis true the Lord's doin's be wonderful," and he lifted his hat in reverence. "Ef so be as ould Squire could a bin here to-day, he'd a gived in naow as Barbie there is Trehanna born. Cap'n Mottram and me wuz witnesses o' Cap'n Sydney's wedding, and he wur just a-remindin' me on it."

"Yes," said Barbara, "he told me he knew my father."

Did Michael feel aggrieved that his generosity in taking his cousin to wife, even while her legitimate right to the

name was contested, should be made of none effect on his very wedding day? or had the appearance of a brother vagabond, as Mottram put it, awakened again his desire for freedom, and action of a different sort?

Probably the latter, for he looked round the bare hills, and out beyond at the sea, and sighed.

Were both husband and wife feeling the pressure of the chain that bound them—within one half-hour of the binding ceremony?

Meanwhile, among the old ruins of Carvarron Castle Miss Vaughan and Mrs. Gardew had laid the wedding breakfast. Not even the bride-cake was wanting. But a cloud hung over them, and all the hopes of the Cardews and Vaughans for brighter days for Trehanna were needed to combat the depression produced by the gray gloomy weather and the unusual ceremony.

The picnic over, the whole party, with the exception of the bride and bridegroom, returned to Lanithiel; but Michael and Barbara, in a little light vehicle, set out on Carvarron moor to see the places where the mines had failed; where the miners' huts stood empty, and here and there a shaft, sinking into the ground, showed how the human moles had been boring for treasure.

They saw the handful of men who were still seeking the lost copper vein, and heard the report of the strange baffling fault, the copper ending so suddenly that to a certainty the vein must be continued on the other side of rock or earthy stratum, but to which side and how far off they had no indication whatever.

"Hopeless sort of business," said the Squire of Trehanna, as he stood with his bride looking round the barren moor, "and the aggravating part of it is that in old days the copper appeared in so many places that one or more was closed up for economy's sake to keep fortune for coming

generations, and perhaps to keep up prices, and now they are undiscoverable—*too* well closed."

"That is worse than anything," said Barbara, "to know that it is hidden and not to be able to find it."

"Yes, here beneath our feet," as he stamped the ground, "lies the fortune of Trehanna, dead and buried. Trehanna itself can exist, and with time may prosper, but never again as it did when Carvarron held it up."

They turned away, down the hill again. The fruitless search was soon to be given up, and then, in less than a year, Carvarron would pass out of Trehanna hands.

It was afternoon as they turned in at Trehanna gates and drove up through the long, beautiful old avenue to the house, and the bridegroom brought home his bride.

They passed no one in the deserted park. The lake under the oak-trees lay lonely and deserted. No swan floated over its waters. The high box and yew hedges had grown into walls around garden and shrubbery, from which startled birds flew out as the vehicle rolled by. The front of the house was silent, no welcoming figure drew near, no hand was held out to greet the bride; and as, flinging the reins to the groom seated behind them, Trehanna came round to the side of Barbara to help her to alight, the ceremonious quiet of his manner had not altered nor abated by a single jot.

They had driven to a side door, and as Barbara stood on the steps, for one moment a remembrance flashed across her brain of a bride, here at Trehanna, who had walked up those terrace steps upon a carpet of velvet strewn with roses; who had passed beneath garlands of flowers, to the sound of music, to be taken into eager arms and lifted across the threshold while the bridegroom cried;

"Welcome *home*, sweetheart!"

The bright picture was gone again in a moment, and Squire Trehanna said:

"I am sorry not to have things to receive you as they should be, Barbara, but you know what poor Trehanna is in these days, and will excuse."

She glanced up at his cold face, and then round at the dark entrance, and felt as if she were going out of the daylight into darkness and decay, to which she, of her own free will, had allied herself. She had married Trehanna, the ghostly wraith of splendors gone by,—not Trehanna the man,—and instead of human living love to greet her were only sad longings and memories of the past.

Her new husband gave her little time for reflection, however; for, putting her hand upon his arm, he drew her rapidly along a broad oak-paneled corridor to the door of a room on the ground-floor, and opening it revealed Miss Griffith seated at a writing-table.

"Good afternoon, Aunt Eliza," said the Squire. "I did not see you before going out this morning to tell you that I was going to be married to-day; but this is my wife—and your niece now. Barbara, this is Miss Griffith, your Aunt Eliza."

"What, Michael?" gasped Miss Griffith.

"I am afraid that I bring out these things rather suddenly, don't I? But you know good news rarely kills anybody. A niece will give you a great deal more satisfaction than a nephew, at any rate; for Barbara is a famous housekeeper, and will take all the bother off your hands."

Miss Griffith stared stonily at Barbara, and then said:

"May I ask, Michael, what kind of ceremony, *if any*, you have gone through? Not one word has reached me of any rite or service in the church to-day."

Michael actually laughed.

"Do you think we jumped over a broomstick, Aunt

Eliza? No, no; we were regularly married at Carvarron Church with all the ceremonies. Perhaps I might have mentioned my intention yesterday; but Barbara particularly wished it to be very quiet, so no one knew but the two families at Penlooe and the vicarage."

"It is a great pity—a—Mrs. Trehanna, that you should seem to fear the ordinary usage of society with regard to marriage. A Trehanna of Trehanna should have nothing to be ashamed of in his alliance and nothing to conceal. It throws a very strange color on the situation—very strange indeed. Only those fear to come to the light whose deeds are evil."

"One can scarcely consider such a marriage as ours to be a deed fearing the light, Miss Griffith," said Barbara, "seeing that it was celebrated in a church belonging to the family, and by the vicar of the parish, in broad daylight, before five or six witnesses. And in the alliance of one Trehanna with another of equal birth and education there is no need of shame. The only reason for privacy was that the poverty of the family forbids the expense which a marriage according to its position in the county would warrant."

"Really," exclaimed Miss Griffith, "Michael, I wonder that Miss Cardew condescended to an alliance with such a pauper. It promises well for us to have our indigence flung in our faces by a stranger before she has been in the house ten minutes."

A hot color had risen to Michael's face, and he was about to speak, when the new Mrs. Trehanna's peculiarly clear ringing accents were heard again:

"No *stranger* would venture on what would be an insult from any one but a member of the family. As a woman may acknowledge her own failings, so a daughter of Trehanna may acknowledge the misfor-

tunes of her own father's house. Its honor is her own, naturally."

Evidently "the girl Cardew" was not to be put down, and her new husband was struck, as he had been once before, with the haughty dignity of the country girl. Had he made a mistake and brought home a new element of strife in this proud "daughter of Trehanna," instead of the quiet working housekeeper who was to be grateful to have a doubtful parentage vindicated?

"Come, Aunt Eliza," he said, with a laudable desire of making peace. "We got married very privately, and did not tell you beforehand—but we won't do it again. So you must forgive us this time."

"Of course you have a perfect right to do as you please, Michael—and will do it, *that I know well*," said Miss Griffith, pressing her handkerchief to her eyes, as though her nephew, having got into the bad habit of stolen marriages, might be expected to keep on bringing home new wives. "But the last bride brought home to Trehanna was my own sister, your sainted mother, a descendant of the ancient kings of Wales—and she was welcomed by all Trehanna with rejoicing, and your father was ready to kiss the ground beneath her feet. But the glory has departed from this unhappy house. Alas that I should live to see it! I am getting frail and worn; my grave is yawning to receive me...."

Here Michael, who was very near yawning himself, interrupted:

"Is there a chance of any tea, Aunt Eliza?"

"Tea!" echoed his aunt, "can you ask it? Our poverty will not allow it long. With so many mouths to feed, too. May I ask if all those women in the kitchen are to wait on—this—lady?"

"Oh, the new servants!" said Michael.

"New indeed," she replied. "Among them is that very woman Deane whom I dismissed from this house in your poor father's lifetime."

"I had better go and look after them myself," he said, with an impatient sigh.

"May I come, Michael?" asked Barbara. "I know them all, you know."

"Oh yes, do, Barbara; you will have to begin at once, you see."

And leaving Miss Griffith to her woe and her pocket-handkerchief, they went off to the servants' quarters, which, with the kitchen, were on the side wing of the house.

Here they found a certain grim expectancy, as of patience long tried.

"Ah! there a be," said a voice in a tone of relief as Barbara appeared in the front kitchen.

"Well, Nancy Deane, how are things getting on?" she asked, with the old smile which most of the girls knew well, for they all came from Lanithiel or the neighborhood, where "Miss Barbie" was as well known as Farmer David or Passun Vaughan.

"Us be stuck, an' nigh clemmed, Miss Barbie. Us 'as bin a-watchin' fur Master—or yew, Miss—all this blessed day; fur us can't get nothin' fur tu ate ner drink, nor there ain't no fire nor no hot water."

"You poor things!" laughed Barbara. "I must tell you first that I'm not Miss Barbie any more, for I was made into Mrs. Trehanna up at Carvarron Church this morning; and, secondly, I'll see that you all get a good dinner as soon as possible, and a piece of my wedding cake to dream on."

"Aw—well—I niver ded! Oh the father! 'Tis mortal quare, 'tes! An' us niver knawed a word of ut!" Such were the exclamations fired off on all sides.

"Well," said Barbara, "you are no worse off than other people, for nobody knew except just very near friends. It was very quiet, for business reasons; but now, Nancy Deane, tell me what you have done, and what is the trouble about hot water. Come here into this room."

And in a few minutes Barbara understood the situation.

At Michael's request, Miss Vaughan and Barbara had undertaken to find servants for the new reign at Trehanna. Although economy would be necessary, Barbara had at once declared that Trehanna farm, dairy, and gardens ought to be utilized and made capable of provisioning the household, and, as in former days, the overplus might go to Twalmouth for the London markets. For this, and for the service of the house, many new hands were needed, if the progress of ruin from dirt and neglect in the great house was to be checked.

Miss Vaughan knew that Barbara's practical sense would very likely be right, and that the knowledge gained in her stepfather's house would be an excellent guide to her—so her wishes were acted on. It was soon known that "Miss Barbie" was going to be mistress, or not a woman would have taken service at Trehanna, and as it was they had bargained for service with the Squire and not Miss Griffith.

On the marriage day, very early in the morning, Michael Trehanna had arisen (because he had no confidence in the convinced Christian in the service of Miss Griffith), and he let in the little band of servitors, and gave them commands to the best of his ability, especially to Nancy Deane, a faithful old servant of his father's time, who had been more loyal to the house of Trehanna than its master knew, and who had withheld Miss Griffith to her face, because the subtlety of Wales had been too much on the wrong

side of honesty for the plaindealing of Cornwall to consent to.

Having, as he thought in his masculine ignorance, put everything in line for clean rooms, and a good meal in the evening, he departed, comforting the servants in their fear of the Welsh griffin by declaring that he was going to fetch Miss Barbie.

When Miss Griffith understood *some* of these things, after her morning chocolate she arrived at the scene of labor in time to withdraw the key of the coal-cellar, and to refuse kindling of any kind, whereby she struck dismay into the thirsty souls who were longing for a cup of tea.

Miss Griffith spoke to them of the change of circumstances in ancient and noble families, whereby luxuries were denied, and the barest necessities were difficult to procure; and when, hardened in sin and thirst, they still demanded hot water, she told them that they should pray that their gross and sensual minds should become purified, and their wicked passions stayed, and withdrew to meditate on the foolishness of men in general, and of Michael Trehanna in particular, who imagined that he could garrison the house with servants, and keep them there against her will. She had experience on her side, for vainly had the last two Squires attempted to keep even the three or four retainers most necessary to their comfort—against the silently conceived determination of "Missus." Obedience to Miss Griffith was better blind than seeing; and if there were foolish people who imagined that they were to keep their eyes open in their master's service, they discovered their presumption. Miss Griffith made their lives so particularly unpleasant that they became recklessly outspoken, and then Miss Griffith grieved over their mendacity and prayed for them out loud till they went away.

In the present instance their sufferings would have been

lightened if they had been sure that Miss Griffith was thirsting and fasting also; but Nancy Deane knew that her apartments included, besides her maid's room, a small kitchen or ironing-room where a convenient stove existed. Here Miss Griffith's private meals were often cooked.

All this Barbara was made to understand. It had severely taxed her self-command to bear Miss Griffith's treatment of herself, and then go to the servants with a smiling face. Now she said:

"I will speak to the Master, Deane; there has been some mistake."

She returned to where her new husband was pacing impatiently up and down the hall.

As she entered he looked up inquiringly, but did not speak.

"I have told the servants that there has been a mistake," she said composedly, "for they have no means of making a fire, and say that Miss Griffith has locked the coal-cellars."

"Seems an impossible kind of a thing, that."

"It is queer, but I know I can believe Nancy Deane, and after the way in which Miss Griffith received me, everything is possible. She probably understood that preparations were making for my coming and resented it."

"I am very sorry that you should have such a welcome, Barbara. You can understand that I suffer under the things just as much as you do."

"Yes?" said Barbara, with a slight rising of the eyebrows. "I knew that there would be difficulties, but I did not think that they could have taken such a form as this. One wonders that a lady of such noble birth should condescend to make herself and her nephew the subject of such a ridiculous piece of kitchen scandal."

"It is no use turning a knife in a wound," said Michael,

striving hard for composure. "Aunt Eliza is Aunt Eliza. She is an old woman now, soured with the misfortunes of our family, and difficult to manage. But I cannot offer violence to my mother's sister nor turn her out of doors, for she is, I believe, penniless, and that owing to my father's speculations," and he stood moodily looking at the great empty hearth of the hall.

"Well," said Barbara, "then we must make the best of it; though what would be easier for me would be just to take that little boat moored down there below and cross over the bay again—home."

She pointed as she spoke to where, through the big hall window, the peaceful bay lay sparkling in the afternoon sun, and the farm of Penlooe seemed to drowse in peace.

"Ah, home!" repeated Michael bitterly. "With all your wrongs, Barbara, you have a home to run to, if you wish. More than I have or have had these many years. Too good for a vagabond, I suppose. However, we have gone into heroics over the key of the coal-cellar, I believe. I'll go and get it."

He went at once to Miss Griffith's room. She was sitting with a very large book before her, from which she lifted the countenance of a martyr.

"Come in, Michael," she said, with a gentle shake of the head suggestive of mournful resignation. "Pray come in. Do not hesitate. I am ready now. All you have to tell me I can bear. My momentary surprise and indignation have passed. I have set my feet in the valley of humiliation, and will drain it to the bitter dregs." (She had got rather mixed in her metaphors, but her intention was poetic, as her nephew remarked.) "Bring your companions here beneath your father's honored roof, to feast and make merry, *I* will not reprove them or you. The hour has not come for that. But do not spare me. I

am but a poor worm beneath the heel of—of Providence. Say all you wish to say."

"Well, I was simply going to ask you for the house-keeping keys, Aunt Eliza."

"Only that? It is very little. My office for fifteen years to be given up to a stranger—but why should I mind that? Why should your mother's only sister be entitled to respect? I will give you every key I possess, of course. I should give up these rooms, and all I have. It may be that Betsey Trudgeon has an attic in which I may lay my head."

"I doubt it, Aunt. From what I saw of her house I should think it was too dirty to lay anything in. But you have plenty of room here, I should imagine, and neither Barbara nor I intend asking you to give up your rooms or your comfort. On the contrary, you will be relieved of the care and trouble of housekeeping, and I hope that the old place may see a great change into pleasantness and prosperity."

"The ways of virtue alone are ways of pleasantness, Michael, and *her* paths are peace. You and your companion may commence a reign of riot and waste, but vice can never lead to true happiness."

"My companion, as you are pleased to term the lady who is my wife and the mistress of Trehanna, has given up a peaceful, quiet life to come here to hard work and economy for the sake of Trehanna, and she and I are as little likely to commence riot and waste as we are to tolerate insult. You compel me to take up arms against you, Aunt Eliza, much against my will: I hope that you will understand that your nephew and niece will respect you and give you every comfort; but the master and mistress of this house demand respect and civility in return. Now, if you have the keys, I will take them."

Miss Griffith arose, murmuring: "Alas for this unhappy

house!" and produced keys from various corners in various stages and conditions of rust.

"Don't people label keys?" asked the Squire.

"People who wish every one to know how to steal may do so," replied his aunt.

"And which is the key of the coal-cellar?"

Miss Griffith was a little confused, and at length produced a huge key from her pocket.

"Thank you," said her nephew, and without farther comment returned to Barbara.

"There are the keys of the household," said he. "I have had to fight for them, and for your supremacy; but you came here to be Dame Barbara, and Dame Barbara you shall be. So Trehanna House is yours," and he bowed, as he handed the keys to her.

She looked at him half sadly, murmured a word of thanks, and was gone.

That young, bright head seemed very young to take all the care of the great ghostly house, now doubly gloomy with the shadows closing in.

Dinner was perforce but a hurried meal, and no great monument of culinary skill, and Miss Griffith did not appear at it. So that the bride and bridegroom were alone.

Michael exerted himself at first to make conversation, but that exertion was soon unnecessary. He found that this country girl, who, as he had supposed, had had a little superficial German boarding-school education to take off the rawness of the dairymaid, knew many of the cities he had visited; had her own tastes and opinions in literature and art, of which she really knew something; and he actually reddened with confusion at last at the way she mischievously laughed at his foregone conclusions about herself. She painted a pretty little word-picture of her

supposed qualities and deficiencies, so true to his mental idea of her that he felt she had seen through him.

"Too clever by half," he mentally exclaimed. "That accounts for her willingness to undertake a marriage for convenience. She and Father David will take the place into their own hands, and the sooner I get out of the way the better."

But was not this his own suggestion?

"You made good use of your school years in Germany," he remarked presently.

"Yes," she said; "you know I had exceptional advantages. Not the ones they put into the school prospectuses, which mean that you get your washing cheaper, or something like that; but that the Jerninghams, the people with whom I lived, and whose daughters used to go to school with me, were very clever people, and knew such lots of other people. We used to hear about everything that was going on, and to travel, and go out a good deal when Mabel Jerningham and I got older."

"Jerninghams!" he said. "Who were they?"

"Jerninghams of Scatesly, a poorer branch of the old family. They lived abroad for economy's sake while their children were being educated, and he used to delight in German enthusiasms and sentiments. It used to be a great joke when Mr. Jerningham got any amount of professors to supper, and they all set to disputing about the Zukunft's Musik or Social Democracy. Mr. Jerningham used to call it 'weekly beer-garden,' and delighted to stir them up till they growled and roared, and shook their long manes, and waved their pipes, and banged their glasses on the table, and then we girls used to flee; but from the upper story we could hear the battle rage."

Michael opened his eyes. He knew the sort of thing right well; but to reconcile such a scene as that with his

ideas of Miss Vaughan's goddaughter at rustic Penlooe Farm, or the white-robed girl who had blushed so angrily at his kiss in the vestry of the church that morning, fairly bewildered him.

"Are you shocked, Cousin Michael?" asked Barbara saucily. "I assure you that I neither waved a pipe nor roared, though I might have followed very highly-born example if I had done so, for old Professor Graf von Höllenstein was the longest-haired and the most excitable of all. Mrs. Jerningham always said it was time for ladies to go when the air got blue with smoke, you know—we didn't smoke."

"I wonder that you cared to come back to the quiet farm life at Penlooe," suggested Michael.

"Ah! I did, though. A town life is all very well when you have absorbing interests—study, or a profession or something,—or when the town is old, but new to you to explore or speculate about; but bricks and mortar get so tiresome—always the same,—and trees and flowers and water always change; and there never was such a lovely place as Penlooe, except Trehanna. It was funny in Dresden; I was not badly homesick, but sick for a sight of the sea, and I dreamed of Trehanna half the time. The sea used to follow me in my sleep, and the longing got greater the longer I stayed. There never seemed to be anything big enough to rest you in an inland place."

Barbara's cheeks were flushed, her brown eyes darkened and brightened, a light seemed to quiver around the gleaming coils upon her head, and the sensitive curves of lip and nostril changed as she spoke.

Michael could not know that the novelty of her position, the excitement of the scenes through which she had passed, and a certain desolate aching at her heart had stimulated a feverish desire to talk and forget.

Dinner and dessert were over, and almost in a breath with the last sentence Barbara rose, took out her watch, and said:

"It is getting late, and I have still some unpacking to do. Good night, Cousin Michael."

She held out her hand, which he shook mechanically, murmuring "Good night"; and in another moment the door closed after her, and she was gone.

Michael sat still. He felt offended, he scarcely knew why.

This was not a simple country girl who needed establishing in her rights, nor whose susceptibilities he need fear wounding. Her light-heartedness in the position in which she had placed herself really bordered on effrontery. She did not seem to remark that she was in the house and the sole society of a man who was almost a stranger to her. There was no consciousness whatever in her manner of the new relation in which they stood to each other. He felt that in his own manner there had been a studied ceremoniousness and perhaps a touch of condescension, and it almost seemed as though she had been laughing at him. *Cousin Michael*, too. Twice she had repeated that since dinner. Ah, that was to indicate the degree of relationship between them; they were cousins, and nothing more. Of course, that was the arrangement. But he hoped she would drop that title before other people; it would lead to such ridiculous comment. What would Mottram say? Well, the sooner he was out of the way the less chance he had to hear the obnoxious words.

Meanwhile the audacious Barbara took her way, candle in hand, to the blue bedroom, which had been prepared for her till Dame Gillian's apartments should be refurnished, and, locking her door, fell on her knees by the bed and sobbed and cried like a frightened child left alone in

the dark. It was so that she felt. The loveless, hostile attitude of her surroundings was new to her, and she felt as though life were to be a weary strife for an empty gain Even if Trehanna were hers and were prosperous, what did it profit her? The future seemed very dark for lonely feet to tread.

CHAPTER XIV

B ARBARA and her maids were stirring with daylight in the morning.

What Miss Vaughan called, laughingly, the ruling passion of her godchild had awakened with the sun, and she was all aglow to put the old hall into condition for the morning meal—in condition as she somehow knew it had been long ago.

If the strange dreams which Miss Vaughan called clairvoyance had been dependent on excitement of the mental faculties, surely she should have had visions that night in the blue room—her first night in Trehanna. But there was no sense of familiarity to her in her surroundings, as here had been in Dame Gillian's room.

She had been long in sleeping, a thousand thoughts and plans crowding her mind, but the strange pictures of which she had spoken to Miss Vaughan as memories in a brilliant light had not presented themselves. And when at last she slept, she slept profoundly.

All her belongings which were not immediately necessary had been taken, or were to be taken, to her future rooms, and in the bottom of her biggest trunk was the Indian silk.

It was half-past eight when Squire Trehanna returned from his early dip in the sea and walk round the newly-repaired stables, and he came slowly along the terrace on his way to the side door, which was all that had been open to him lately.

To his surprise, he found the front door flung open, and penetrating to the hall, he saw the sunshine lighting up the oaken beams and panels from floor to rafter. From the far end the big mantelpiece seemed to beckon to him, catching the light on every polished knob, the "Trowe Trehanna" in bold relief, and with massive logs piled on the hitherto empty hearth ready for cold or rainy days. Frowsy curtains and moth-eaten hangings and cushions were gone, rusty muskets and fowling-pieces and rickety modern chairs had likewise departed; but big old wooden settles, ancient chairs of really antique shape had appeared from some forgotten lumber-room, while pikes and lances, helmets and steel corselets shone on the walls and hung in the corners.

Through the tall windows, unshuttered now and free from the grime and cobwebs of late years, the sun flung the blazon of Trehanna in scarlet and gold across the floor, painting the white cloth laid on the table in the corner for breakfast.

And that same breakfast-table was a fair sight to a hungry man. It was big enough and broad enough for dining-table and sideboard in one, and on it stood a great joint of cold roast beef which might be a copy of the breakfast-dish of King Hal himself.

The coffee service at the end was more modern than the great flagon which flanked the beef, but which contained water instead of beer.

The crisp rolls of bread, so unlike the dark, heavy-looking loaves which had represented the staff of life lately in Trehanna; the hard little golden balls of butter—everything, in fact, upon the table, fresh and wholesome in its simplicity, bore witness to the new era of housekeeping in the old home.

Leaning over a tall goblet, which she was filling with

roses, was the author of all these changes—Dame Barbara, her fresh linen gown as spotless as though she had not rummaged every lumber-room in Trehanna that morning.

"Good morning, Dame Barbara," cried the Squire.

"Good morning, Squire Michael," said she. "Is the hall right?"

He came towards her holding out his hand, when the huge head of a splendid mastiff reared itself between them, rising from beneath the table where he had crouched.

"Lion, be good," said Barbara. "This is the master; give him your paw. Paw, sir!"

The splendid beast looked full at Michael with intelligent considering eyes, and then deliberately sat down and lifted a huge paw, which Michael, with a smile, took and shook, as the dog evidently expected. Then, putting his hand on Lion's head, he asked:

"Who is this gentleman?"

"You are right—he is a gentleman," said Barbara. "I am glad that you recognize his breeding. *Bon sang ne peut mentir.* His race is as good as yours. He has lived in Penlooe till now, but his ancestors lived in Trehanna. Is he allowed to return to the home of his forefathers?"

"If his mistress wants him, he most certainly shall."

"Good. Lion, you stay with me. Say 'Thank you!'"

Lion turned a doggish adoring gaze on Barbara and licked her hand.

"No, not me—the master!"

But Lion looked up at the gentleman and raised his paw.

Michael laughed as he took it.

"Bravo, Lion!" he said. "A gentleman may kiss a lady's hand without loss of dignity; but a handshake is the thing between equals, hey?"

Lion wagged his tail with a sort of benevolent satis-

faction with things in general, and went off to lie down in the sun.

"Breakfast is ready as soon as the Squire is ready for it," said Dame Barbara. "Do you like it here?"

"I should rather think I did. It always used to be here, you know. But I must go and make myself decent to sit down. "I'll be back in five minutes."

"Oh, stop! One moment! About Miss Griffith. I have heard nothing of her this morning."

"I'll go now, and ask her if she is ready, and say we are here," said Michael, and strode off, for the hope of a good breakfast, the first for many weeks, was before him.

When he appeared he said his aunt was coming, but they were not to wait.

"To reassure her; I told her that the coffee was not made in stockings to-day," he remarked, as he sat down.

"Father David chuckled over that," said Barbara, as she handed him his cup. "No, I don't think stockings superior to coffee-bags, but I can quite believe you would not like Cornish coffee. It is as bad as German tea."

"This is splendid, Dame Barbara," replied the Squire, whose heart was evidently softened by good cookery.

"Ah, but I learned in Vienna," said Barbara, smiling. "But now—how about the hall? Isn't it too bare?"

"I don't know," said the Squire. "It had grown too much like an old curiosity shop. All sorts of incongruous articles were heaped up together here."

"There is something wanting," murmured Barbara. "What was there always on that shelf in the corner?"

"Couldn't tell for the life of me," said the Squire. "I've a kind of general idea when a place looks all wrong, sort of Queen Anne and Mary-anne all mixed up, you know; but to know what particular article hung on what particu-

lar peg passes me. That corner, though—ah,” with a sudden thought, “why, I’ve reason to remember that. There used to be a model of the *Golden Hope*, of course, and my father was awfully particular about it, and I actually fetched it to sail it on the lake, and it got wrecked, and I got the biggest licking I can remember. I quite remember, though, that I refused to admit its value. I said it was an *old* thing and very badly rigged, and my father’s admiration for its age struck me as quite remarkably foolish—especially as the fishermen here always broke up their old boats.”

“Was it quite destroyed?”

“Went all to splinters. But how did you know that there should be something there? Who told you?”

“I—I had an old nurse who was once a servant here,” said Barbara, blushing and getting very angry with herself for doing so. “Of course the hall is Tudor,” she went on hurriedly, “and I wanted to put things in keeping, but could not find all—that—that would furnish it like it was—once.”

“You’ve managed to get a lot of old things together that look right. The place looks more homely this way. Sort of thing to remember when I’m curled up in a sheep-skin coat in a straw hut in Bosnia.”

Of course everything that reassured him as to leaving Trehanna in good hands would lighten his heart at going.

Barbara was about to answer when Miss Griffith entered, “moving slow in the weeds of woe,” with a countenance of suffering chastened by lofty resignation.

Barbara rose. “Good-morning Miss Griffith,” she said, holding out her hand.

Miss Griffith touched it with icy fingers.

“Good morning, Mrs. Trehanna.”

She was wrapped in a shawl, with black lace muffling her head, and she shivered ostentatiously.

"Are you cold?" asked Barbara. "Would you like a fire?"

"Oh no, thank you," said Miss Griffith. "Pray do not go to that expense on my account—you would need a fire fit to roast an ox to warm this place."

"You never liked the hall, Aunt Eliza," said her nephew. "What shall I pass you? Will you try the omelet? Or, here are eggs and fresh rolls."

"No, thank you, Michael, I am quite unable to take things which suit your robust appetite."

"Will you have coffee or tea, Miss Griffith?" asked Barbara.

"Neither, thank you. My poor frail health does not allow me to take anything which affects the nerves."

"What can we get you?" asked Barbara.

"A cup of cold water is all I see here that I can take," said the frail victim of Trehanna selfishness.

"Oh, by the way, you usually drink chocolate, don't you?" said Michael, looking from his suffering aunt to Barbara.

"I did not know," murmured Barbara. "I will see if we have any. I am so sorry that I did not know."

Miss Griffith wrapped herself closer in her shawl, but answer gave she none; while Barbara rang the bell beside her.

"See if there is chocolate in the house, and get some made at once for Miss Griffith," she said to the servant who entered. "Ask Deane about it. And you do not take this bread, Miss Griffith. Shall they make you fresh toast, or—"

"No, thank you," said the victim. "I am accustomed to nothing at this hour but a biscuit. Long years of economy

and abstinence have reduced my appetite, and now all these luxuries"—and she cast a glance at the table—"would be but dust and ashes in my mouth."

She looked just then as if dust and ashes would be the most fitting diet for her.

"If you would kindly order what you want, Miss Griffith," said Barbara, "perhaps it would be easier."

"It would be the best way, perhaps," Michael agreed.

"Very well," said Miss Griffith; "but as there may still be a long interval before my simple repast can be prepared, I will send Priscilla to the kitchen with instructions, and I need not burden you with the restraint of my presence. I did not ask you, Michael, whether you wish poor Priscilla to be dismissed. She has wept the whole night at the thought of leaving me, seeing that her place has been filled, as she supposes."

"Oh, I don't know," said the Squire, "if you want her."

"Pray do not think of my poor needs or wishes," said Miss Griffith, aggressively resigned.

"Oh well, we'll talk about it," said Michael; and the martyr, with a slight inclination of her patient head, whereby she closed her eyes and compressed her lips into a wan smile, rose, and nearly fell over Lion, who, with a low growl, suddenly stood up between her and Barbara.

"Oh, my poor heart!" murmured Miss Griffith, pressing her hand to the spot where that much-suffering organ might be supposed to labor. "What wild beast is this?"

"Nothing but a dog, Miss Griffith," said Barbara. "Lion! Lion, down!"

"I only hope that he will not attempt to enter my rooms, Mrs. a—Trehanna. As a rule ladies prefer small thoroughbred animals to such immense mongrels."

"He is better bred than you are," thought Barbara

defiantly, but she refrained from speech, and Miss Griffith retired.

There was silence for a few minutes, and then, as they were alone, Michael remarked:

"I am afraid that Aunt Eliza will take a time to simmer down. You see she has been monarch of all she surveyed for so long that she resents having a rival in authority. But she is a very feeble old antagonist."

Barbara was silent.

"Of course you have the reins of housekeeping in your own hands," he continued; "but I should think that if she prefers to take any meals in her own room it would be as well to let her."

"Far better," said Barbara. "But I think it would be as well to have things distinctly defined before trouble begins, for I foresee trouble *will* come if Miss Griffith can make it."

"There is no need to meet it half-way. What things can you have defined?"

"Miss Griffith keeps the rooms where she has always lived, does she not?"

"Well, yes—where she is now. They were my mother's rooms, though."

"Exactly, the proper place for the mistress of the house."

"But you chose that other place, upstairs."

"Oh, I don't want to take her rooms from her, she is perfectly welcome to them; but she must have an attendant, for the other servants have been warned to put no foot in them."

"Do you mean that you consider these new servants as yours, and refuse to allow them to serve your husband's aunt?"

A hot flush had shot into his face. After all, had not Barbara's money made this new era of greater comfort

possible for Trehanna? After all, he had married for money, even though he had not been bought by Lady Branscombe.

"Mine!" exclaimed Barbara, raising her dark eyes in evident surprise to his face. "They were hired for the service of Trehanna, as indeed I was, I suppose. I don't see how they could be the exclusive property of any one person."

"Then why are they to do nothing for my aunt?"

"Because she herself has forbidden any one of them to enter her rooms. Indeed, the command has been given in such a way as to make my entrance impossible also; and she accuses them of all sorts of things."

"Good heavens! Is there never any peace in a household of women?"

"That I don't know, for I never lived in an exclusively feminine household; but had you peace here before I came?"

"Of course not. It was hideously uncomfortable. That is partly why—I mean—of course, I thought that a practical mistress of Trehanna would bring things into order."

"She is willing to try; but you cannot be ignorant, Michael, that no one in this village would take service with Miss Griffith. Her character, as it is drawn in the village, is too awful. She got Priscilla Darke from a good way up the country, and I very much mistrust the girl; but as there seems no one else to serve her, it will be best for Priscilla to remain—exclusively for Miss Griffith."

"Really, Barbara, if you listen to village gossip about people, you will put yourself in a very uncomfortable position. I should have thought you knew that."

"If I had listened to it, should I have been here? I know perfectly well that Miss Griffith was painted in glaring colors; but the difficulty that I had in convincing servants beforehand that I was to be mistress showed me that my position would be a difficult one. There is no use in blinking

the matter. If I have your support in authority for a time, I think I can get things into order; if not, I must just go back to Penlooe."

"Back to Penlooe, after marrying into Trehanna. That would be a sweet scandal."

"I would rather bear that, and have it over, than be beaten inch by inch in every task I undertake for Trehanna, and have to give in at last."

Michael looked at her critically, more attentively than he had ever done before. It struck him that however strange had been her motive in coming to Trehanna, it had not been a mere desire for position, as he had been ready to suppose. She was not merely an ambitious country girl, to whom accident had given a Trehanna father.

The large brown eyes looked shadowy and dark as they met his eyes fearlessly, and the pale rose had left her cheek, leaving it very set and white.

"I wonder," he said, "what you have in your mind to do for Trehanna? How long will your enthusiasm for reform last? Till the house-cleaning is done?"

"How long will it last? Till Trehanna gets back its old place in the county, and is what it used to be long ago. It has got to be sound and strong and beautiful, as it can be, if only Trehanna men and women do their duty. This lovely old house is going to be a beautiful home, not a decrepit old barrack, half empty and falling to bits; and the estate, that never did anybody one half-pennyworth of good that lived on it lately—that gave people fevers and ague and rheumatism, and every possible disease, till they put down a dozen deaths every year to bad drainage and sodden walls and decaying smells and broken-down huts—the estate has got to get back to what it was when Trehannas were not above minding their own business, and doing their duty by all on the land and

all the men's lives on the land. Oh, there's such *heaps* to do!" she said, stopping out of pure incapacity to say all she meant. She certainly looked to be very much in earnest—eyes, cheeks, and lips all alive with color and feeling.

Squire Trehanna thought that after all there was more romantic schoolgirl enthusiasm about her devotion to Trehanna than there was of worldly calculation.

"Well, you've got your work before you, then," he said quietly, with perhaps just a touch of superiority. "But Rome was not built in a day, nor Utopia, and I am afraid that you will soon find that taking your place in the county will need all the time and money you have to spare, and your enthusiastic dreams will fade, rather."

"We shall see," said Barbara, a quick flush covering her face at his tone. "You think I am a silly girl, with a head full of impossible notions, which will give way with time to a more natural devotion to chiffons—and county society. If you take the trouble to renew your acquaintance with me in a few years' time, you will be able to judge, perhaps."

"Renew my acquaintance with my wife! If anybody heard you, Barbara!"

"It is truth, you know. Ours is really the very shallowest acquaintanceship."

"We can improve it, I suppose, if it is necessary."

"No—I don't think it would bear improvement; the foundation is too feeble."

"We seem to be talking very silly stuff. Is there anything more in which I can be of use to you?"

"More?" asked Barbara; and in truth Michael had to confess to himself that besides eating his breakfast, which she had prepared for him, he had not rendered himself conspicuously helpful.

"No, thank you," she answered. "Unless you will kindly tell Miss Griffith about her servant."

"Yes," he said; "and though I may not be quite so enthusiastic in my dreams of Utopia, you will remember that our agreement of comradeship makes my backing up of your authority a natural sequence, and one which I shall not shrink from."

"I think it will rarely be needed," she said, with a faint smile. "I shall not often trouble you."

"So much the better; constant tales of complaint do nobody any good—spoil everybody's temper for one thing."

And the Squire walked off, trying to feel the natural superiority which an experienced man of the world possesses over a crude boarding-school girl.

"Selfish, cold-hearted animal," said Barbara to herself. "What does he really care for, I wonder? Not Trehanna, unless it's Michael Trehanna."

CHAPTER XV

THE post-bag for Trehanna did not arrive much before midday, and on the very day after Squire Trehanna's wedding he received, among other letters, a badly written scrawl, couched in broadest Cornish dialect—the contents of which made him to flush and pale, to use very strong expressions between his teeth, fling the offending epistle into the grate of his room, and then carefully pick it out again and examine handwriting, address, postmark, etc., and then lock it away in a drawer.

It contained the coarsest and most brutal references to Barbara's mother, as a camp-follower and adventuress, who had wheedled Captain Sydney Trehanna into giving his name to cover her dishonor, while his speedy death allowed of her return with the real father of her child to demand Trehanna money. Would Mrs. Sydney Trehanna, if she had been a lady, have married David Cardew? It was well known that Barbie Cardew was no other than Farmer David's own daughter; only Squire Trehanna could be hoodwinked into marrying the worthy daughter of such a mother. High time for the girl Cardew to be married too—Captain Prance's ship delayed rather too long at sea, and she must get a husband in time. Let him look to it, lest the Trehanna name should cover the daughter's shame as it had covered the mother's. He was warned! Signature there was none.

Squire Trehanna walked up and down his own room in a rage. What enemies could Barbara have in the village?

All these old accusations against her mother were stale. He had heard them in his own father's mouth, and Aunt Eliza had groaned over the coarseness of them a hundred times. Aunt Eliza? Aunt Eliza could not write broad Cornish. Such stupid malice. Whoever or whatever Barbara's mother had been (and that the Vaughans, Colonel Mottram, and the registers could tell), Barbara was a born descendant of Trehanna. One look at Dame Gillian's portrait, or of half a dozen others in the gallery, with the peculiar long, brown eyes and broad brow, the poise of the head—to say nothing of the hair, which had been repeated in many different shades of the ancestral copper again and again—was enough to refute that lie. As for the rest, a marriage such as Barbara and he had concluded must refute the coarser part of the insinuation. And there remained but the dregs of the bitter cup of slander. The gallant sea-captain may have pleased the Cornish girl. The girl who only last night had spoken with such love of the sea—but—out of sight, out of mind. The absent lover had delayed in his coming, and so she had taken another, but not for love, as she had said clearly enough.

He flung himself down in a chair to think, and his eye fell on the other letters. Lawyers' accounts. The timely payment of Barbara's dowry had floated the Trehanna estate off the rocks. He jumped up again. Barbara's money! Barbara's money had saved Trehanna, and he had married her for that money, as well as for the sweet morsel of revenge.

He stood still as if some sudden pain had shot through him. He had married for money, and had married what? What did he really know? He had saved himself from Laura Branscombe, and Trehanna from her clutches, but handed Trehanna over blindfold to a girl of whom he really

knew nothing. She might be worse than Laura. Pshaw! The very contract they had made with each other, a contract of self-effacement for the good of the place, proved what the girl was made of. She might have a craze for the old house, and a romantic notion of bringing prosperity upon it, by her own unaided exertions, but there was neither vulgarity nor sensuality in the face he had scrutinized so keenly a few hours before.

The accusations in that letter came from a mind essentially and brutally vulgar. He had always thought Barbara's sensitiveness with regard to her birth and name was ridiculously exaggerated—a girl's hysterical nonsense. He thought that time had certainly wiped out all trace of the insult which his own father had fixed on the wife and child of Sydney Trehanna.

But it seemed not. And the writer of that letter obliged him now to stand by his wife. His marriage would show that he, at least, believed in no such abominable slander; but—oh, hang it all! Must he put off going away in order not to set the tongues loose again at a deserted wife? He had never thought of that—nor she either. Of course, if he went at once, he left Barbara the object of worse suspicion than if he had not married her.

He pressed his lips into a hard, determined line, while his brows came down over the deep-set blue eyes and darkened them almost to blackness.

Well, he would wait for a while; and he would find out who wrote that letter, and when he did . . . He nodded his head once or twice, as one who promised himself something.

Miss Griffith gave Barbara plenty of work. She ordered what Barbara thought impossible delicacies, most necessary for her frail health and wretched appetite. She wanted truffles and jellies and liqueurs, expensive sweets,

game, and what not; and Barbara, accustomed to hear of Miss Griffith's economy and Michael's semi-starvation, disbelieved the asseverations of Priscilla that her mistress was accustomed to such things.

It was Deane at last who showed her an enormous box, now almost empty but for a few tins at the bottom; and it was Deane who produced countless boxes, bottles, and tins from some rubbish-bin, all bearing the name of a celebrated firm, and proclaiming distinctly enough that no delicacy was too rare or too expensive to be preserved in proper receptacles and forwarded to Miss Griffith at Trehanna.

Barbara grew hot with anger as she saw the proofs of the solitary gluttony of the wretched old woman—a saint, who could see her sister's son turn in despair from the coarse, unhealthy viands before him, while she feasted stealthily on the most savory food *his* money could procure!

It was after a very distinctly-worded declaration from Michael that he would hear no complaint from his aunt of his wife, as he wished none *on the other side*, that Miss Griffith had seen her way to procuring her accustomed fare without fear of discovery from her nephew. And Barbara had the house-money, and must pay for it.

It took a large portion of the stock which had been put into Barbara's hands for the house expenses, and she had to scheme and plan as she had never had to do in the days of her home life with its simple substantial plenty. It brought a look of care upon her fresh face, and her self-denial, where she could avert expense, touched the oval of her cheeks and lessened their bloom.

Farmer Cardew noticed the change, and sighed to himself; "Ah, 'tes true. Poor maid. Her've got a heart's desire. Her liveth tu Trehanna, and the Lord have sent

her leanness"—a literal taking of the text which would have interested the vicar.

Never a word said Squire Trehanna of the ugly anonymous letter in his drawer. The man was not accustomed to confide in people; but he watched Barbara when they were together as she was not used to being watched, and she resented it. Her labors in house and hall, in dairy and still-room, kept her constantly employed at first; and though they met at meals, and for unavoidable consultation as to changes and repairs and workpeople occupied, they rarely took many steps or passed many hours in each other's company.

Barbara was convinced that he was hurrying over his arrangements in order to be free to get away; and Trehanna himself was quite unable to get up an enthusiasm about missing dish-covers and salt-cellars, or the repairs on the dairy window. He felt irritated at this curious companion whom he had thrust upon himself, and who was so evidently antagonistic to him in her very inmost fiber. Why had she lied to him and said that she had never been in love if she had this sailor in her mind? Love! Pah! very necessary for a cheap novel; every one had to go through a time of idiocy, as he had himself, and for his old self he had the greatest contempt. Perhaps she was now, as he had been once, finding out that she was longing for a face that was not there, in her life, and never would be. And so he watched to see. But he saw—nothing. Pshaw! She was just a housekeeper. Furniture here, crockery there, linen in heaps, lists, jam-pots, brooms, these things filled her soul. If she were quiet a moment, one might be sure that she was mentally arranging her storeroom shelves, or calculating the need of pickles. And when she was not still, she was out of his sight.

Meanwhile, people who had heard of the marriage—

people who for years had not entered Trehanna gates—began to call on bride and bridegroom.

Barbara did the honors gracefully enough, as though to the manner born; but the bright gaiety which had been so natural to her at Penlooe seemed to have remained there in her old home—never to have entered Trehanna.

She began to reward herself, now that so much of the house was habitable, and even beautiful in its ancient pride, by refurnishing and arranging Dame Gillian's rooms for herself. From every corner of the house, from lumber-rooms, garrets, and cupboards she had sought together curious pieces of furniture which had been repaired or copied according to her instructions; but she never showed her room to Michael.

One rainy day in the afternoon Squire Trehanna, who had spoken to his wife half an hour before in the rose-garden, where, with her hand on Lion's head, she had been watching the clipping of the tall hedges, came upon her again in the long gallery, where he saw her standing at a distance from him, with her hat still on her head. He could see the gleam of the shining silk on it in the last rays of daylight. She was as still as though she were an effigy like those around her, and he came quietly, almost stealthily, from one long shadow to another to see if it were herself in Dame Gillian's portrait that she was admiring. But it was not.

She was looking at Bevill Trehanna, the sailor, who stood in ruff and trunk hose, smiling full at her, while his good ship, the *Golden Hope*, rode at anchor behind him.

Michael Trehanna looked from the portrait to the gazer, and his eyes opened wider, and his heart actually quickened its beats, in astonishment at that which he saw.

Barbara did not see him. Her face was as white as the face of the dead, her very lips were bloodless, and some

mysterious change seemed to alter the features as though she were in the grasp of an invisible power. Her eyes had grown larger, darker, as though distended with pain—the shadows lay deep around them. Her hands were clenched, and she drew long, painful breaths from time to time, as though she were suffering acutely. In that drawn quivering mouth half-spoken syllables seemed to form themselves, inaudible, unfinished. She might have been addressing words of passionate anger and reproach to that painted, smiling face.

A quiver ran through her whole figure, and with a sobbing breath she lifted her hands to her head with the gesture of one beside herself; then dropping them like lead to her sides, she turned from the picture, and walked with bent head and slow, almost feeble steps to the other end of the gallery, and vanished through the door.

Without stopping to think, Michael followed her as she passed the small antechamber and entered Dame Gillian's room.

At its door, however, he paused in astonishment. It was no longer a ghastly echoing space, whose tapestry walls thrust themselves on the sight of a crude, uncurtained glare.

The windows were hung with ancient silken curtains, faded and repaired, but still showing their former colors in the folds of deeper blue. The big bed, which had stood like a skeleton of former greatness, was now draped with curtains of needlework and embroidered on blue and silver silk like that in the window, while the black pillars or posts of the bed now revealed the silver flutings and scrolls which had been hidden by tarnish. A coverlet of blue, with a curious silver fringe, lay across the bed, which looked as though in constant use.

Near the window was a toilet-table, and above it on the

wall hung the mirror already mentioned, in its silver frame. It seemed to be stretching out bare, empty branches, as though something had been broken off.

Barbara's feet made no noise as they crossed the carpeted floor, with the same weary, feeble gait which he had noticed, as though she had been an old careworn woman instead of a young girl in the first freshness of life.

She went slowly to a recess in the wall where a sort of kneeling chair or *prie-dieu* had been placed with an ancient book upon its desk, and here, sinking down upon her knees, her head fell upon her clasped hands and the old book, but the hat embarrassed her, for with a hasty movement she tossed it away upon the floor, disarranging her hair as she did so, till it slipped in a slowly loosening coil from neck to shoulder, and from shoulder to waist, and then lay like skeins of bright silk upon the floor.

Her face was hidden in her hands as she knelt, and only a shivering sob shook her shoulders from time to time.

A sort of shame took hold of the unseen witness, in her silence. He had been so astonished that no feeling but pure surprise at first had possessed him, but now he was in the presence of some deep incomprehensible feeling, something that lifted this country housekeeper, whom he had made his wife, out of the trivial light of petty irritation in which he had regarded her. She could suffer and be quiet.

He stole away with bent head back to the gallery.

Why should that portrait awake such feeling in Barbara? Ah, the sailor!

But unless he was very much like this Trehanna scamp of Elizabeth's time, there could be nothing to awaken such emotion.

Ships, real ships passed down the Channel or anchored in

the Bay of Twalmouth day after day. Sailors crowded the streets of the little town. She had no need to look at this picture to be reminded of them.

He shrugged his shoulders. Who could understand?

CHAPTER XVI

IT was next day in the afternoon that Lady Branscombe came with Hester to call on Mrs. Trehanna.

Hester had already been to see her cousin, but Lady Branscombe waited for a particularly charming toilet, which was already ordered from Paris, to visit Michael Trehanna's dairymaid, in his presence.

Barbara was looking rather pale, but quiet as usual, and smiled with one of her now rare beautiful smiles at the sight of Hester.

Arthur Trehanna had returned to London on the very day of the wedding, ignorant of the event.

"Such a lovely day!" said Lady Branscombe sweetly, "and the park looks so beautiful. That is what I like about Trehanna, that it is large enough—one has room to breathe as one has been accustomed. Little poky places like this of the Fortescues oppress me quite. It must be a delightful change to you from Penlooe, Mrs. Trehanna."

"Quite delightful," said Barbara calmly, as she handed the lady a cup of tea. "And then, of course, Trehanna has an interest for me which it could never have for a stranger. It was my own father's home."

They were sitting in Miss Griffith's drawing-room on that lady's express invitation, and the charming figure in Parisian mauve and black cast a side glance at her when she got her answer from Michael's dairymaid.

"Oh yes. By the way," said Lady Branscombe, "it is so interesting. You have quite a little fortune in fathers,

Mrs. Trehanna. Is Mr. Cardew here? I did so want to speak to him."

"He lives at Penlooe," said Barbara, "though he is here very often. I dare say you would find him at home about this time any afternoon."

"I was scarcely intending to call," murmured the lady. "It was about the butter. You are quite a loss to the Penlooe dairy, I am sure. I suppose they have a new dairymaid, and now the butter is so salt."

"A fault easily remedied," said Mrs. Trehanna. "A word or a line to Mrs. Cardew would be enough. I was told that Penlooe butter went to Porthrbyn, and was rather surprised. The Fortescues used to have a very good dairy, but I suppose the establishment has been reduced."

"Oh yes! Dear Lady Fortescue told me that she had to get rid of the dairymaid. Quite an impossible creature. And where the cows went I don't know. You say it was a good dairy. Did you know it well, Mrs. Trehanna, and the maid? You are so experienced."

"No," said Barbara, "you give me credit for more experience than I can claim—in impossible creatures and dairies. I only know Penlooe dairy, and my own here. Are you learned in such matters?"

"Scarcely. You see I took up all my time as a girl with foolish accomplishments like music and languages and things. I had not the benefit of such practical education as I am sure good Mrs. Cardew must have given you. Now my mother was one of those fragile, ethereal beings who have been brought up in quite the best society. She was a Fitzmaurice, you know, and so proud. Her daughters were to be ladies, she said, not kitchenmaids."

"Yes," said Barbara. "I have heard that it was the idea, about fifty years ago, that to be ladylike meant to be thoroughly useless. I believe the pendulum is swinging

back again now, and women of *really* ancient birth are doing what their ancestresses long ago did—ruling practically over the whole house, and not expecting to be admired because they know nothing of their houses outside the drawing-room door.”

“And so Mrs. Cardew is of really ancient birth? So charming for her daughter.”

“She has no children,” said Barbara coldly, “if you are alluding to the present Mrs. Cardew, and I really do not know anything about her birth. She is a thoroughly good woman, though, and has been very kind to me.”

“It is quite romantic, isn’t it? You see I have really never seen the good lady, and hearing that Mr. Cardew had married your mother, I naturally supposed her to be his present wife.”

“Yes?” said Barbara, slightly raising her eyebrows. “I think that Hester knows better than that.”

But Hester and Michael had strolled to the other end of the room, where the latter was showing his cousin a portrait of her own father as a child.

“I dare say she does,” said Lady Branscombe carelessly; “but you see everybody knows something different, and such wonderful stories are told that I preferred not to listen.”

“Indeed!” said Barbara icily.

“Ah, much the best way, dear Lady Branscombe,” sighed Miss Griffith.

“But if you have heard such wonderful stories about me, Lady Branscombe, it would be interesting to me to hear them,” said Barbara, in a clear, resonant tone which might well reach the ears of the other two at the end of the room, as her former conversation, carried on, especially by Lady Branscombe, in a polite undertone, would not.

“Oh, I think not, Mrs. Trehanna. They were scarcely

of yourself, you know, and—really—you know there are certain things which I scarcely *could* repeat."

"Dear me!" said Barbara, with a little contemptuous laugh. "Somebody must have been playing upon your credulity as a stranger, I am afraid, for the facts of my life are as well known in the village as those of my godmother, Miss Vaughan. Is it my father they are pleased to traduce, or my mother?"

Michael and Hester had ceased speaking, and the former, with folded arms, was leaning against the mantelpiece, silently regarding his wife, but without showing the smallest desire to open his mouth in her defense.

"Really, traduce is a strong word, isn't it? I don't think they say anything really offensive either of Mr. Cardew or of Captain Trehanna."

"Then it is my mother. You spoke of your own mother just now, Lady Branscombe, and can understand, perhaps, that I have the same feelings as a daughter that you have. Will you tell me from what mistake I can enlighten you about Mrs. Sydney Trehanna?"

"Our mothers had probably so very little in common, you know," said Lady Branscombe, as scornfully as she dared, feeling the eyes of Michael Trehanna on her. "Mine lived such a refined, secluded life, and certainly never served a regiment in any—a—official capacity."

Barbara actually laughed. "Oh, Lady Branscombe, it's too funny! What a shame of them to try and take you in like that! *La fille du Régiment!* Is that the notion? Quite operatic. Only they don't have such picturesque personages in these days."

Lady Branscombe drew up her little figure into an attitude of offended dignity, and Miss Griffith's eyes had long sought the ceiling.

"You are quite right to mistrust information of that

kind," continued Barbara, smiling as though Lady Branscombe's words could have no other possible translation, "and it is doubly ridiculous when one contrasts it with the facts. It is so very likely that the granddaughter of the Earl of Lennox should be that kind of thing."

Lady Branscombe stared at her. Miss Griffith dropped her eyes from the ceiling, round as pebbles. Trehanna bit his mustache.

The fact was that Grace Lennox had known so little about her father's family that it was not until Barbara undertook careful inquiry in proper quarters that she discovered the truth she had just communicated to her hearers.

"It is very possible," Barbara went on, a dangerous light in her eye and a deep pink on her cheek, "that our mothers had little in common, Lady Branscombe, though greater seclusion could scarcely be imagined than that of a lonely Government station in the hills of Northern India, where my grandfather held a responsible post. He was one of many younger sons, and had little communication with his own family. Here my mother was born and lived until my father came upon the scene. He was sent with a military detachment (including Sergeant Cardew) to quell a rising among the natives, and was wounded in defense of my grandfather's house, carried in there to die and nursed back to life by my mother. A short time afterwards the Honorable George Lennox, my grandfather, was killed by a stray bullet and my mother left defenseless, without support, or any experience of the world whatever. She and my father were married, and within two years she was a widow, and Mr. Cardew, by my father's dying wish, brought her and her child home to his family. The Trehannas at that time did not recognize her claims, and she married Mr. Cardew; a step which her very helplessness

owing to her secluded life and want of experience of the world, explains. One thing she recognized though, as I do, and hope I always shall—the sterling worth of Mr. David Cardew, a faithful servant, devoted friend, and wise protector. All I have and am, except my bare name, I owe to Father David, for my mother died in one year after her second marriage."

"What a charming story!" sneered Lady Branscombe. "Such a pity that it is not better known! One might really put it in a book, you know. Mr. Trehanna, you are a literary man, you should make quite a little romance out of it."

"I am afraid I am not good at romance, Lady Branscombe. And then it strikes me that the Trehannas don't come out in a particularly heroic light. What do you say, Aunt Eliza?"

"Oh, don't ask me, Michael! In these family questions I always think one cannot be too careful. There are always two sides."

"Well," said Hester warmly, "with all due respect to our grandfathers, and all the other Trehannas who had a hand or a tongue in it, I think they acted detestably."

Barbara glanced up at Hester with a queer little mow.

"One thing is very certain, though," Hester continued; "Barbara was far better off in Penlooe. I think Farmer Cardew is just delightful, so thorough and hearty—and Penlooe is an ideal place. I wish I lived there instead of in Princes' Gate."

"Ah! idyllic pleasures are all very well; strawberries and cream, and a pink sunset in summer," said the Squire of Trehanna, from his stronghold by the fireplace; "but I am afraid you would miss the society of Princes' Gate when November or December sleet and fogs make every day forty-eight hours long."

"I never got a day longer than twenty-four, and usually they were short half-hours, too," said Barbara, looking into the pot to see how the tea held out.

"But you may have had congenial society, although not of the sort Hester is used to," said Lady Branscombe. "Poor Hester might not have such wonderful adaptability, or—a success among that kind of people."

Barbara raised her eyes. Was this a new attack? What did it mean?

Michael remarked her perplexity.

"Lady Branscombe is alluding to your triumphs in Lanithiel society, no doubt, Barbara. The scalps you hang at your belt, you know. Isn't that it?" he added, turning to Lady Branscombe smilingly.

She then had known, or supposed she had known, of Barbara's history as related by scandal. How far did her knowledge extend? As far as Captain Prance? As far as that of the writer of that letter?

"What a way to put it!" she answered, smiling back at him. "I see you still wear your scalp."

"It is a pretty tough one, I think, and perhaps not worth the taking. But Lanithiel parish is not such a happy hunting-ground as a London drawing-room, and Barbara may not have had so many admiring braves as if she lived in Princes' Gate."

"Mrs. Trehanna is far too modest to boast of her conquests, of course," said Lady Branscombe; "and as you have succeeded in carrying off your prize you can afford to pity the bereaved ones."

"I do, with all my heart," said Squire Trehanna gravely; "if anything could be done in the way of consolation stakes, now. Are there many of them?"

Lady Branscombe looked at him mistrustfully.

Barbara laughed. "I shall almost begin to believe in

these mythical adorers myself soon," said she, "and fancy I see them sitting in a row on Penlooe beach, opposite, sobbing and sighing and waving their damp pocket-handkerchiefs across at Trehanna."

"Mr. Cardew would make short work of them, I suspect," said Hester; "but I know of one who would have taken *your* scalp, Michael, with the greatest pleasure—and hung it at his own belt, as Barbara disdained his."

"Hester, what nonsense you talk!" said Barbara. "That is interesting, now. And I never knew of my danger. Who can that be?"

"Have you so many acquaintances still here, after your long absence, Mr. Trehanna?" said Lady Branscombe. "Quite delightful for you and Mrs. Trehanna to have so many mutual friends."

"But it seems that this gentleman is by no means my friend, and I don't know whether Barbara will approve of my cultivating his acquaintance."

"Oh, you know him—at least I *think* you do," said Hester.

"Hester, don't!" said Barbara in a low voice, but Michael saw Hester give a little mutinous nod.

"Is he a near neighbor?" said Michael laughingly. He saw a quick glance shot from the forget-me-not blue eyes across at Miss Griffith, who closed hers in pious sorrow.

"Seems to me that this is a game of 'What is my thought like?'" continued Michael. "Is he animal, vegetable, or mineral?"

"He's none of all of them," said Barbara. "He is fabulous and mythical. And besides, I don't like making a play of one's friends' feelings in their absence."

"In these days the great thing is to take nothing *au grand sérieux*, Dame Barbara," said the Squire lightly;

"but if you wish, we will give up the pursuit of the gentleman. Let us suppose that he 'loved and he rode away'—out of our knowledge, at any rate."

"*'He sailed away for a year and a day,'*" quoted Lady Branscombe, low, but very distinctly.

Such a quick glance of intelligence shot across Michael's face that Hester, who was looking at him, said:

"Ah, he thinks he knows now, and he won't tell. Barbara, it is no use frowning; why, everybody knows that Courteney Wearne declared he'd have broken Michael's neck if he had known what he was after—till too late."

"Young Wearne, hey! Barbara, you've a deal to answer for. Ha! What is that?" for in the quick start he had given at hearing a different name from what he had expected, the Squire had knocked over a little silver figure from the mantelpiece behind him, and it rolled upon the floor. He came forward to pick it up, saying, "I hope I have done no damage," and held it up to examine.

"Ah!" cried Barbara joyfully. "There is a little candle-holder from my old looking-glass," and she rose impulsively and took it from Michael's hand.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Trehanna," said Miss Griffith icily; "that statuette is mine, and is neither a candle-holder nor does it belong to any one's looking-glass."

"There were two," went on Barbara, almost as if she had not heard, "and the branches of my mirror stand out uselessly waiting for their little candlesticks."

"Then I am afraid you must seek them elsewhere," replied Miss Griffith; "the solitary remnants of ancient silver which have come to me—the last scion of the Griffiths—are too valuable in their tale of bygone days for me to part with them."

"Of course," said Barbara quickly, a sudden change stiffening her figure, and turning her beautiful face to

marble. "But this is old Trehanna silver, and there is its fellow on the mantelpiece. They are candlesticks."

"You are entirely mistaken, Mrs. Trehanna," said Miss Griffith, an unhealthy red flushing her whole face. "They are a pair of statuettes, shepherd and shepherdess. How could they be candlesticks? or belong to anything? They have no holders or anything else for candles. After so many years in Trehanna, I may really be supposed to know something of the objects in the house."

One listener remarked that the point whether they were Griffith or Trehanna property had been dropped by Miss Griffith.

Barbara held the figure in one hand, while with the other she pressed the back of it, and slowly, as though it were clogged by long disuse, she drew up the right hand, holding a massive wreath above the head, where it formed a perfect holder for a candle of ordinary size, while the foliage beneath the feet separated itself into detached leaves, of which the stems made a decided hook at the back, evidently designed to attach the figure to some other object.

"By Jove!" said Michael, while the astonishment on the faces of the two younger ladies was heightened almost to a look of terror on the countenance of Miss Griffith.

Barbara handed it to Michael.

"Perhaps you can judge," she said briefly. But she walked to where the companion figure stood, and pressing the spring in the same way, made the same change in the attitude of the shepherdess that she had made in that of the shepherd.

"You are a witch, Barbara," said her husband as lightly as he could, to relieve the tension. "Your knowledge of fifteenth-century things is wonderful to behold. I suppose you recognized the workmanship to be the same as that of the mirror. I never knew these were anything

but statuettes. We are all gone back to the Tudor period, Hester," he continued, turning to his cousin, "and Barbara can actually spot a chair, or a flagon, or a table in a minute as belonging to the time of Queen Bess and put it into its proper historical corner. I am thinking of sporting trunk hose and a ruff to be in keeping."

"It would suit you splendidly, Mr. Trehanna," said Lady Branscombe. "You should give a costume ball, and copy the ancestor whom you most resemble in your dress."

"I am afraid I am not remarkably like any of them," said he. "There is one old chap who turned Puritan and followed Cromwell, and probably spoke through his nose, who is represented in the gallery in full armor—a sour-looking old rascal who died fighting, and his gloomy old phiz is said to be like mine. I hope it isn't striking. But if you want to see something really startling, you should see Barbara's portrait, taken over three hundred years ago."

"Oh yes, do let us go," said Hester. "Laura, you have never seen the picture gallery."

So they went up to the long gallery—all except Miss Griffith, who sat still in impotent rage at the audacity of that shameless woman.

It might be that Barbara's life lately had whitened her cheek and deepened the shadows round the long brown eyes, adding a still more penetrating expression to the look which was so striking in the great picture of Dame Gillian.

Lady Branscombe gave a little shudder as she stood before it—a gay little modern fashion plate with fuzzy yellow hair and distracting flowers and feathers.

"The good lady makes one feel quite creepy," said she, with a hollow little laugh. "Did she ever murder any one? She looks like it."

"I never heard of it," said the Squire briefly, disregarding the covert sneer at Barbara, for the likeness was too vividly striking for the most casual observer to deny.

"And who is this gentleman in trunk hose," continued Lady Branscombe, moving on. "What a handsome man! A real Trehanna. Such eyes—I am quite fallen in love with him."

"He seems to have as much attraction for fair ladies now as he had three hundred years ago," said Michael contemptuously, with one eye on Barbara. "But I would not advise you to squander your affections on him, or on his prototype if ever you should find one, for he was a thoroughly unprincipled scoundrel, I believe. It is Sir Bevill Trehanna, Dame Gillian's husband; and a fine life he led her, I am told. He was just a shallow, light-o'-love sailor, with a wife in every port, sometimes two."

"Now you sha'n't take away his character just to make me give up my admiration for him. I dare say his wife made things pretty hot for him, poor fellow. I am sure she looks like it. And I just adore sailors—don't you, Mrs. Trehanna?"

Barbara had been speaking to Hester, but turned on being appealed to.

"Lady Branscombe is asking if you adore sailors, as she does, Barbara," said her husband, in answer to her inquiring look.

"All?" asked Barbara briefly.

"Oh, well, perhaps you and she would choose out one or two specimens on which to concentrate your general homage."

"Lady Branscombe's adoration will probably be romantic and theoretic," said Barbara. "Jack is a really good fellow, but I've seen him a great deal too often and too closely to have any illusions about him or worship him."

"You know *so many* sailors, Mrs. Trehanna?" asked Lady Branscombe. "Perhaps they worship you instead."

Michael was listening apparently unconcerned. Was Lady Branscombe hitting at that mythical sea-captain?

"Perhaps they do," said Barbara carelessly, "but if so they manage to keep it pretty well to themselves. Half the Lanithiel men have been or are sailors. The sea devours man, and yet draws the sons of drowned men to it too. It is a hard thing to be a sailor's wife or mother."

"You speak quite feelingly, Mrs. Trehanna. One might think you had tried it."

"One may feel for others. But if you wish to try it, Lady Branscombe, don't let me dissuade you."

Lady Branscombe tossed her head, and turned to the next portrait; while Barbara joined Hester, who was still standing silent before the portrait of Dame Gillian.

"Well, Barbara," she said, at last turning round to her cousin, "you are certainly the youngest woman for your age that ever I saw. This bears the date 1570; and as you must have been nearly thirty at that time, you are now considerably over three hundred."

Barbara laughed at Hester's reasoning.

"Yes," she said. "I am like the miraculous Hindu of whom Captain Prance spoke, who was older than his grandmother and younger than his daughter."

"Who is Captain Prance?" said a voice at her side, and looking up she saw her husband.

"An old friend of Father David," she said, "captain of a trading vessel. He used to bring me wonderful shells and feathers when I was a child, and his yarns are more wonderful than his presents—told in the broadest Cornish dialect too."

She did not see that Michael's eyes, under the dark

brows, were fixed on Lady Branscombe, watching her quick interest as soon as the name of Prance was spoken.

"Queer name, Prance," said he to his fair visitor. "By the way, can you speak good Cornish, Lady Branscombe now that you have so much to do with the natives?"

The sudden question, tacked on to the remark about the name, brought all the blood to Lady Branscombe's face.

Why should he put those two things together? He surely did not suspect her of that letter.

"No, I don't like it," she said pettishly, turning away. "It is a barbarous jargon."

"Oh, Laura!" exclaimed Hester innocently. "You that can even read the most awful Cornish verse. She actually has a book, Michael!—written in the broadest dialect. She is far cleverer than I at it."

"You are too modest, Lady Branscombe!" said Trehanna, with a fascinating smile. "You must have a real literary gift to appreciate our despised tongue. I assure you that there has been a good deal written in the dialect—*fact and fable*. Don't disdain it. If you want to gain the heart of a Cornishman, talk to him in his own speech."

"Who is this extraordinary person?" asked the lady, stopping at the next picture, in the hope of turning the subject, while the blood hammered so hard in her temples that she heard nothing that Michael said of his ancestor.

Hester meantime had asked an explanation as to the wonderful Hindu lady who had been old and young at the same time; and Barbara told her the story, and its connection with the Indian silk in her possession.

"A pity you have none of it on to-dao. Barbara," said Hester. "Haven't you discovered any marvelous properties in it yet?"

"No," laughed Barbara. "I expect it was intended

for some old idol or other which was already so hideous in the beginning that time could make no impression upon it—unless in getting a few features defaced it became more comely."

Even as she spoke, however, for the first time a vague feeling of doubt and unrest in the possession of the beautiful fabric crept upon her.

Lady Branscombe by this time was in a hurry to go; for the Squire was treating her to a disquisition on the Cornish dialect, varied by allusions to the brilliant imagination of those who used it; regretting the coarseness of expression often inseparable from its vigor, and so one till the Parisian frock afforded no more delight to its wearer, and she was almost as angry with Michael Trehanna as she was with his dairymaid.

Having packed the two ladies safely into their little basket carriage, Michael came hastily back to the hall where he had left Barbara. She was still standing there, doubting in her own mind whether she should return to Miss Griffith's room to make good her claim to the candlesticks, or whether it was worth while to do battle with the poor greedy old woman for such a trifle.

He came swiftly up to her.

"They are gone," he said briefly. "Now tell me, Barbara, how it was possible for you to recognize and alter those statuettes into candlesticks? I drew off the attention of the others, but the explanation which I gave won't hold water. You *must* have known them to make the change. I thought you had never been in the house until the day after you had promised to marry me."

She bowed her head. "Nor had I," she said.

"And since then Aunt Eliza has kept her rooms like a besieged fortress. How could you have discovered them since?"

"I saw them really first in your hands this afternoon," she said.

"You are pleased to be enigmatical," he answered sternly. "How could you possibly recognize a thing and be better acquainted with its mechanism than those who have known it all their lives, if you only saw it for the first time?"

"I might tell you, but what would be the use? You would not believe me."

"Have I ever disbelieved your word?"

"Are you not disbelieving it now? But I know it would be hard for you to believe, and my explanation could only make it worse. If I told you all I knew or thought about this and many other things in Trehanna, you would disbelieve not only my word, but in my sanity—or you would think that I was deluded or prejudiced."

"How can you tell that, I ask you, Barbara? I have not consciously deserved your mistrust."

"You think," she said, with a bitter little laugh—"you think you have shown that I may trust in the frank friendship of the good comrade you promised me?"

She was thinking of his silence while his old love had put his new wife to the torture by her insolence that afternoon. Had he said one syllable to defend her?

He remembered the anonymous letter, and his enforced stay in idleness in Trehanna to protect her good name, and his eyes flashed.

"However that may be," he replied, "I have a right to hear your explanation about those candlesticks, and you do wrong to withhold it."

"Then I will give it," she said suddenly, turning to where he stood, and lifting her beautiful face, with dark, passionate eyes, to his, while her hands clung to the back of an ancient leathern chair for support.

"But remember that though you have not one fiber in you to sympathize with what I feel or know to be true—though all your experience and education as man of the world will oppose you to me, and though you are likely enough to consider me a fool—yet, as you have insisted on my speaking, you are bound in honor to believe that I am now speaking the truth as I know it—or at least you must pretend, for good manners' sake, that you do."

"Good! Go on," he said, leaning his back against the wall, and watching the white face and shadowy eyes beneath the golden glory which was just touched now by the evening sunlight.

"My knowledge," said Barbara slowly, "is the remembrance of an old dream. The dream was so long ago that I don't know when I dreamt it; but I stood dressing myself in that very room which is now mine, Dame Gillian's room, and the dusk came on, and I told a woman, somebody called Alison, to light the tapers. She was slow, and I grew impatient, and took up one of these little figures, which was standing on the table before the mirror, and, pressing a button in the back, the arm flew up, and I put a candle into the holder, a candle which I took from a box near, and I stuck one of the figures on the branching arm of the looking-glass while Alison stuck in the other. It went more slowly to-day, because while I pressed the spring I had yet to lift the arm of the little figure—but it went."

There was silence.

Barbara waited. Would he believe such a story as this? She knew very well that she would not have done so in his place. The horrible thing to her was that every fiber in her own practical nature revolted against the wild impossibility of which the other half seemed composed.

"So it is the remembrance of a dream which taught you the mechanism of these figures. You cannot remember when you dreamed it. But when do you first remember this dream?"

"Fully only to-day. But always when I saw that mirror I knew there was something wanting."

There was silence again.

"It will be of no use to give this explanation to Aunt Eliza," said the Squire. "Nor is it of any use to speculate on what she would say."

"Let the things go," said Barbara impulsively. "I hate—oh, how I *do* hate scenes and speeches such as we have had to-day! I would rather have one square inch of looking-glass, and a farthing dip stuck in a bottle, than wrangle and snarl as we did this afternoon. Let her keep them. It was the surprise—something like seeing an old friend, which made me speak, and then I had to prove that I was not clutching at a thing to which I had no right."

"Exactly," said Michael, in a toneless, expressionless kind of voice.

Barbara looked at him inquiringly, and then her mouth took a firmer, prouder curve. She would not ask if he believed her. She had given her explanation, as she had promised. The rest did not concern her.

Trehanna turned and went into Miss Griffith's room, whence he emerged a few minutes later, with a very slight increase of color on his bronzed cheeks, carrying the two little figures.

"I should like to see them in their places, Barbara, if you have no objection," he said; and she gravely preceded him to her own room, where, carefully scrutinizing the bare branches of the silver frame of the big looking-glass, he discovered the places for the candlesticks to be attached, and put them on himself. Then he looked round the room.

"It looks as if you lived in another world or another century up here," he said. "It is a lodging fit for a ghost."

"It does well for me, then," she said indifferently; "for I feel like a ghost—sometimes."

CHAPTER XVII

TIME was going on. Under the auspices of Farmer Cardew considerable reformations were taking place on the estate—reformations, however, which only half interested Squire Trehanna. He was sensitively conscious that the money employed on these improvements was Barbara's money. He feared to suggest outlay, though he often saw urgent need of it in wider schemes than those which entered the shrewd but comparatively narrow brain of Cardew. The situation was irksome. He felt as if he were no longer master of Trehanna, and a return to his old vagabond life grew more and more desirable. He began to speak to Barbara of it. As she had been expecting it from the first, she took it as a matter of course; but great was the astonishment and disgust of David Cardew when he heard of it, though both Barbara and her husband assured him that such had been the compact from the beginning.

Little by little, reports had got about, through servants' chatter and the hundred and twenty ways in which things leak out, that the Squire of Trehanna cared no more for his wife than he did for an old picture in the gallery, and that the marriage really was no marriage at all.

Mrs. Trehanna had grown perceptibly paler and thinner. She passed many hours alone with Lion, inspecting all parts of the great echoing house, and planning and working in the gardens and shrubberies with her own hands, visiting

outlying lodges and cottages, and showing an acquaintance with every household on the estate.

She and the Squire were sometimes seen together, but the servants could not tell which evaded the other most.

A few formal unavoidable visits had been made by the pair, but otherwise the life was only saved from absolute melancholy by the hard work in it.

Miss Vaughan was puzzled, Lady Branscombe delighted and triumphed, Hester troubled and silent about it; and Miss Griffith, having apparently finished draining the Valley of Humiliation as she had promised, proceeded to ascend the heights of self-satisfaction and congratulation on the other side.

Matters were thus when Miss Vaughan appeared one day to visit her godchild with a very important piece of news.

Sir Lionel Wearne was to give a ball in honor of the bride and bridegroom at Trehanna.

"I came to give you due notice, child, because I was not at all sure whether you will have a dress in time. The invitations will be out in a few days."

Barbara was as delighted as a child. After all, she was but a girl, whose character had been forced lately into a very ill-fitting mould.

"A dress!" she cried. "Wait a minute, godmother. I have something which will not easily be beaten here in Lanithiel—even by Lady Branscombe with a Parisian dressmaker at her back."

She ran off to return with a large yellowish-looking roll, which, spread upon table, sofas, and chairs, disclosed a quantity of beautiful old lace, really of very great value.

"There," said she. "I found it among a lot of faded old brocades and moth-eaten velvets. But isn't it lovely?"

"Most beautiful. We'll put that into skilful hands, Barbara, and say nothing about it till the time comes.

You will be splendid. With this and the Trehanna emeralds you will stand comparison with Lady Branscombe or lady anybody else."

"Trehanna emeralds! I have none."

"But your husband will have them."

"I don't know. I don't think so. He has never spoken of them—and I cannot ask for them."

"Nonsense, child! Every Mrs. Trehanna wears them."

"I can't help it. I won't ask Michael for jewels."

"Silly girl. You are as proud as—as—"

"Proud enough to do without them."

But Miss Vaughan did not approve of this pride, and was determined that her godchild should not be mulcted of the ornaments befitting her rank as mistress of Trehanna.

She managed to walk up herself with the formal invitations, for Sir Lionel confided a great deal in her, and in fact would have confided himself and all he had to her keeping long ago if she would have left her brother. She had timed her visit well, for she found Michael at home, as well as his wife.

He was rather taken aback at the prospect of a ball at which he and Barbara must appear together. He had never seen her in anything but the very quietest and plainest attire. He supposed she could dance, but he did not know whether she had any notion of how to behave in a ballroom. It was scarcely the kind of thing to be learnt at Penlooe—or in a German boarding-school. How far these Jerninghams of whom she spoke had educated her for society he could not tell.

"Don't you like balls, Mr. Trehanna?" asked Miss Vaughan, as she remarked the doubtful expression on his face. "Barbara is quite delighted at the prospect."

"Is she?" he asked grimly. "I have given up de-

lighting in turning round and round to the sound of a fiddle."

"Fiddle, indeed; you are to have the band of the 009th from St. Ulphs. Colonel Mottram is coming. Sir Lionel says he knows you."

"Mottram—ah! We have been expecting to see him here."

"Well, he is to be there, with all the world and his wife. And it is to be pretty much in honor of the bride and bridegroom, so we must see that Barbara represents Trehanna fitly. I tell her that she ought to wear the family emeralds."

The Squire looked up in surprise.

"Eh—by George!—I quite forgot till this moment. Of course she ought to have the jewels, I suppose. I ought to have solemnly presented them to her. Eh, Barbara? You might have reminded me. But I wonder where they are."

"I don't know anything about them," said Barbara quietly.

"Aunt Eliza will know," said Michael; and with a word of excuse he went to question that lady, who had not thought fit to appear.

"Jewels!" said Miss Griffith. "What jewels do you expect to find in this house, Michael? Are they for Mrs. Trehanna?"

"Of course," said he; "my mother's jewels should go to my wife, as she is Mrs. Trehanna of Trehanna, as they would have gone to Humphrey's wife if he had married."

"I am afraid that is a slight mistake," said Miss Griffith frigidly. "The jewels my poor sister brought with her, as she had no daughter, she gave to her only sister—myself,—and I really must decline to give away such a bequest, valuable from the affection which prompted it."

"I have no intention of asking such a thing, Aunt Eliza; I want the emeralds. And there were other things which belonged to the Trehanna family; I remember seeing them on my mother's neck dozens of times. They could not be given to any one but a Trehanna."

"With these I have nothing to do, Michael; there is another jewel—a jewel of great price, which would be very appropriate to Mrs. Trehanna, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit."

"Will you kindly tell me plainly, Aunt Eliza, where I can find the emeralds?"

"No!" said Miss Griffith hastily and angrily. "Your father always kept his own jewels. You had better search for his jewel-box in his old room."

"It is not there in its old place—so much I have seen. Surely he will not have sold them."

"Who can tell? He had a right to do what he pleased with them, I suppose."

"I am not sure. At any rate, I never heard of his having sold the emeralds. They were at least two hundred years in the family. Are you sure that he did not send them to his lawyer's or anywhere to raise money on them?"

"I can tell you nothing about them."

And he came back to his wife and Miss Vaughan visibly troubled and disappointed.

"I don't mind about it in the very least, Michael," said his wife. "I really think that I don't care so much about jewels as most people do."

"But you ought to have some decent thing to put on, Barbara," said her husband testily.

"We may as well make up our minds to do without," said Barbara calmly. "It is the same with the plate and silver. Deane tells me of a great quantity of silver which, when she was here before, was in constant use; and now—

I don't know whether you have noticed it, but there is scarcely an article of silver in the house, except our forks and spoons and one or two old flagons—apart from what is in Miss Griffith's room," she added as an afterthought.

"My dear Barbara, do you suppose that I keep count of the dish-covers?" he asked irritably; and they made haste to change the subject.

When Miss Vaughan was gone, however, the storm broke loose.

"Have you a real pleasure in demonstrating to the world in general that you have married a beggar, or next door to it, Barbara?" he asked bitterly.

"Of course not," she answered. "In what way could I do such a thing?"

"You complain of the lack of silver, and Miss Vaughan evidently thinks you hardly used because you cannot be decked out in jewels. When we married I put Trehanna House and everything in it in your hands. I can do no more."

"I have never asked you for more, or complained that you did not give me either silver or jewels," said Barbara proudly. "I told you clearly enough that I don't care anything about them. It was your own idea to ask Miss Griffith for them. *I* would never have done so."

"There it is again. What do you mean by hinting that Aunt Eliza has all the silver? Do you think that my mother's sister is a pickpocket?"

"Michael, how can you? How dare you speak to me like that?" cried Barbara, stung to the quick by his words. "Have I ever hinted that your aunt had anything but what is hers? You say you gave me all that was in Trehanna; and you did, and with it the bitterest, cruellest enemy that ever a girl had. She has never lost an opportunity to sting or insult me since I came; but since you

told me that you wished no complaints on either side, there was nothing for me but silence, or to combat her with her own weapons. *That* I never did. She sits in her own rooms in the very heart of the house, packed round with all her worldly goods, so that you can scarcely move without stumbling against some valuable thing or other. They are the feathers in her nest; let her keep them. How she got them I do not care. But before you tax me with base suspicions of her, do as I have tried to do in the interest of Trehanna—find out for yourself what should be in Trehanna household, and what is not there; find out where your silver and jewels, and china and papers, and every other kind of thing missing is gone. You could be silent while I suffered the vilest insult the other day; but the least word in my mouth which could cast the faintest blame upon those who tortured me brings angry words from you. I have struggled hard to keep my side of our contract; but I begin to see now that it was a wrong one—a great mistake.” And she bowed her head upon her hands upon the old chimney-piece, turning away from her husband.

There was silence for a moment.

“So you repent of your bargain?” said Michael bitterly.

“Yes, I repent of it,” said she, lifting wet eyes, and flinging out her hands with a despairing gesture. “I repent. I did wrong. I meant to marry Trehanna—but not you. I did wrong to promise lifelong faith to you: I meant to spend my life and time and strength for Trehanna; but I never meant to spend it in bondage to those who look upon me with such scornful loathing.”

“Bondage!” he exclaimed, “is the bondage yours? There is small need to remind me that you never meant to marry *me*. You talk of loathing, you—who shrink from the most accidental touch of my hand, who never

spend five minutes more than the most absolute need of civility requires in your husband's society. And my aunt—I believe the very air of her rooms, the very sight of her face, turns you sick."

Barbara looked up from where her head had fallen again like a frightened child. Her pale face, with deprecating, trembling lips and scared, dark eyes, was inexpressibly touching.

Michael loomed at her from his place against the wall, his eyes glowing with a somber fire.

"You think I cannot see? You are surprised that I can gage your feelings," he continued. "You are a little mistaken in your judgment of me—your bondage will be lightened very soon, never fear! I am going as soon as I can get my things together and my destination fixed. As for my aunt, I will do my best to put her in the most distant corner of the house, where she and her belongings will offend your sight as little as possible. I cannot well give you back your freedom to take a husband of your own choice, but I can remove the one who is so offensive to you."

His nostrils dilated as he spoke. He was gradually growing more intense in anger, and his breath came more quickly.

Barbara's head was hidden. He saw, from the sobs that shook her whole figure, that she was weeping bitterly.

He turned and walked hastily up and down the hall, casting quick glances at the bowed head and heaving shoulders—sound there was scarcely any.

"I don't see why you should trouble yourself, Barbara," he said; "you may rather triumph. Trehanna will be yours alone—without the hated society of its former master. We have lived in the same house for—how many weeks

is it? And in less time than I shall take to put the sea between me and my old home, you will have forgotten my existence."

There was no answer. The twilight was fast closing in, and presently Barbara turned in the semi-darkness and made silently for the door.

"You might tell me if this arrangement satisfies you," he said, coming nearer her.

"Satisfies me?" she echoed. "That you should ascribe a voluntary exile on your part to me and my dislike? Have you not spoken again and again of your wish to go? I never supposed that you had the very faintest wish to pass the remainder of your existence with a dairymaid."

"Have I ever called you that?" he asked impatiently.

"No. I am glad that you had the grace not to say it in my hearing, but you have a lively fear lest I should disgrace you. It seems a pity sometimes that we are so completely incapable of understanding each other."

"But are we?"

"Yes," she said. "It is hopeless to try. But perhaps you will believe me if I tell you that if you can find any means of setting us free from each other, of letting me go back to my former home, I will gladly—oh! so gladly second you."

"My going is not enough, then?"

"No, no," she said, drawing a long breath. "I want to be free. Even you might be sorry for me if you knew how I suffer."

"Well," he said slowly, "we cannot explain. We are a long way off from each other. In fact, I think I am slower to understand women than most men. The feminine element does not suit me, I think. What does it matter? Perhaps you may get your freedom soon. Who knows? Every bullet has its billet—in Bosnia as well as elsewhere.

In the meantime there must be a truce—a hollow peace, Barbara, till I go."

He could scarcely see her face, but from the shadowy corner where she stood she stretched out a hand to ratify the treaty.

He took it in his, holding it tightly.

"This, till we quarrel again. It will not be long, I dare say."

And Barbara, drawing away her hand, disappeared.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE night of Sir Lionel's ball arrived, and Michael was pacing the hall of Trehanna waiting for his wife.

He had asked no questions as to the dress of his wife, and the subject of the jewels was tabooed between them by tacit consent, so that when she appeared, muffled to the throat in some soft downy kind of white cloak with a few stars of jessamine in her hair, he merely said one word:

"Ready?" and helped her into the carriage, which was already in waiting.

As they rolled through the gates he said:

"By the way, Barbara, you may not have many acquaintances among the people whom we shall meet to-night, and of course many will come who are engaged for dances in advance. Young Wearne is not at home, I hear, but Arthur Trehanna will be there. Still, you may find it a little slow, and if so, you know you can always count on me for a dance if you wish rather than sit down."

"Thank you," said Barbara quietly. "If I am too conspicuously a wallflower, it will be very kind of you."

Arrived at Wearne Place, Barbara disappeared for a moment after her long drive, for it was some distance from Trehanna, and Michael waited to enter with his wife. As she came towards him without the concealing cloak, his eyes widened, and for one moment he lost his self-possession so much as to forget to offer his arm.

This the dairymaid!

She was all in white; but the beauty of the exquisite lace which draped her whole figure heightened the dazzling fairness of a neck and arms such as Michael had never seen. Long, feathery sprays of jessamine caught back the lace over bust and skirt. The rich coloring of her hair, and the velvet depth of the brown eyes, gave brilliancy enough to the whole vision to make it unique in beauty.

No wonder she could do without emeralds! It would be a crime to break the fair outline of a throat so perfect.

Michael was recalled to his senses by a sudden rush of color over bosom, neck, and cheek beneath his eyes.

"I beg your pardon, Barbara," he stammered, and they entered the ballroom.

They were a little late and the rooms were full. Sir Lionel knew how to do the thing in style when he did do it, and the big ballroom was a blaze of light and color—alive with music and the hum of voices and the rush of feet upon the floor.

Husband and wife were soon swallowed up in the vortex and separated.

If Squire Trehanna had feared to find his wife perpetually in need of his kind offices to get her partners, he might be pleasantly disappointed, for it was difficult to get sight of her at all. From a ring of black coats he would sometimes see her bright head overtopping some little man, and the quick smiles coming and going round a dimpled mouth, as her white teeth flashed, and the brown eyes gleamed and danced. Or, whirling by him, he saw an arm and neck whiter than all the others,—the hand on the shoulder of "some fool of a dandy," and a black sleeve round the waist he had never touched.

What a lot of idiotic bosh it had been for her to talk of her suffering. She suffer? It looked like it!

And then the loathing and dislike he had flung back at

her when she had accused him of it! She evidently did not feel it, for Arthur—hang the fellow!—standing about her seat, hanging over her, never taking his eyes off her—Arthur Trehanna had always been an utter cad, a regular—

“Hullo, old man, here you are!” said a voice, as Mottram the younger clapped him on the shoulder. “Going the pace, aren’t they? Splendid waltz that! You are not dancing?”

“No,” said Trehanna lazily. “Good enough for the young uns, you know; but I can’t say I care about it.”

“See my old dad over there, talking to your wife? Good for you, Trehanna, that he isn’t ten or twenty years younger. I’ve been taxing him with it. He is most hopelessly gone on Mrs. Trehanna.”

“Is he?” said Michael. “Funny thing! I suppose he knew her mother.”

“Yes; but I don’t think he loves her for her mother, any more than Lennox does. The pater solemnly introduced Neil Lennox to Mrs. Trehanna as a cousin—and so he is, I suppose.”

“Lennox? Who’s he?”

“To the left there. Big, sandy-haired Scotchman in the 009th uniform.”

“Oh, is that the man? Where does he get his cousinship from? I don’t see it.”

“He does, bless you—they had the same great-grandfather, I believe. Mrs. Trehanna’s grandfather and his were brothers—and the pater knew both of them.”

“Oh,” said Michael coldly, “a very Scotch cousinship. But I say, Mottram, seems to me that the *Liar* is piling it on to the British public wholesale. Do they take in all the stuff that Phelps chooses to make up?” And they were soon deep in newspaper talk. A little later a couple came up close to where they were standing.

"Thank you so much. Yes, vanilla ice, please, if there is any," and Lady Branscombe sank into a seat, while her cavalier went off in search of refreshments. She was all pale violet silk and gauze, which veiled her rather meager charms.

"Oh, Mr. Trehanna, I supposed you were here somewhere, but you have been hiding surely. What an age it is since I have seen you!"

And he was forced to go and talk platitudes, while Mottram sauntered off wondering why Trehanna was in such a deuce of a temper.

"It quite reminds me of times long ago," said Lady Branscombe. Don't you remember how you used to stand on guard and never dance, except—well, except with one person?"

He remembered well enough. Cramped, crowded rooms filled with gyrating idiots, and one angel in whose eyes was heaven, and who was—must be—the desired of all beholders, but yet *his* alone.

What a fool he had been to think this shallow little creature an angel!

He glanced across the room—Barbara was not there. Ah, yes; she was standing in a quiet corner, so deep in conversation with that "gaunt, sandy-haired Scotchman" Lennox that they did not notice the waltz which was commencing.

Lady Branscombe followed his eye.

Barbara was looking up at Lennox with absorbing interest. Then she spoke, gravely enough, and the young man's expression changed and melted strangely at her words. What could she be telling him? Her life? Her wrongs, as she would call them? Perhaps—

"How sweet!" said Lady Branscombe, with a laugh. "Such a sympathetic couple!"

"Pah! one more man being made a fool of," thought Trehanna. "Fools are the happiest. Why not I?" Then aloud he said:

"I suppose you are booked for everything to-night, Lady Branscombe. No chance of this dance for me?"

"I expect I am, but I'll make a mistake if you like," and she threw a coquettish glance at him as she rose and took his arm. He had forgotten her old trick of reclining so far in his arms that her head all but rested on his breast, for she was too short to reach his shoulder.

"I'm not so strong as I was," she murmured presently, panting so hard that her tightly-laced little bodice seemed as though it must burst. "Could we rest a moment?"

"Would you rather sit down?" he asked, bending to hear, and she flung a languorous glance through half-closed lids at him as she said: "No, only one moment. It seems as though those seven years were a dream, and we were together again. But will your wife like your dancing with me?"

"Do you think my wife looks particularly interested in my doings?" he asked scornfully.

"I always knew who you danced with until that miserable day when papa— But I must not think back. It is too awful. Is it true that you are going away again?"

"Have you heard that?"

"Yes. I hear many things. I could scarcely believe it. Poor Mrs. Trehanna! But she seems able to console herself."

"She wouldn't come here to weep, you know."

"Ah, you are as sarcastic as ever you were. But people are all saying it is such a pity."

"But don't *you* think the best thing I can do is to go?"

"I? Why should I think so?"

"Have I been mistaken?" he murmured. "Surely you understand my danger here."

She actually blushed, raising her eyes—half frightened, half delighted—to his.

"I—I scarcely know what you mean," she stammered.

"You used to be quick enough to understand me, Laura," he answered in the same low tone. "It may be easy to you for us to meet again and again with the polite insincerity of society on our lips; but for me, with a very different feeling clamoring for expression, it is impossible. Far better to go."

"But I—I thought you . . . I mean you are not in earnest."

"Am I not? Because I have kept the secret—never confided it to any human being, nor hinted at it except to you—you think I don't feel."

Fluttered, confused, delighted beyond her utmost hopes in these latter days, she whispered:

"I know you feel, Michael—I believe it now. But it is too late."

"Too late to undo it, but not too late to flee from what might yet overtake me. In some moment of excitement I might let it out, and then what would become of you?"

"Let it out? Oh, surely not, Michael! I can be prudent, and so can you. We will be very good children, you know. Surely you need not go."

"How can I believe in your promises of being good? Suppose it comes into your head to *write another?* I should not be satisfied, then, with letting you know that I knew the anonymous author. I should let your secret out, and our polite intercourse would cease; or I might let my feelings get the better of me, you know, and say things that aren't complimentary. No. Trust me; a

little absence is good sometimes. I'll go to a land where there's no danger of anonymous letters in the Cornish dialect." He said this in a low, gentle voice, with a kindly, genial smile; and then, lifting his head, remarked casually: "Dear me! one never notices how time flies when one is so interested. They are dancing a quadrille; I must really go and look up my wife. So long, Lady Branscombe."

Her face was a study—white and red in turns; utter bewilderment, shame, rage succeeding each other. How he had befooled her!

Meanwhile Trehanna, with a certain air of exhilaration, of triumph in his gait, perhaps a satisfaction at a score wiped out—very different from the gloomy indifference of an hour ago—crossed the room, speaking to one and another until the dance was over. By and by he found Barbara. She was standing in a little group composed of Arthur and Hester Trehanna, Captain Lennox, and one or two officers of the 009th.

Michael came up to his wife from behind, and said close in her ear:

"When is our dance, Barbara?"

She faced round, drawing back; then, recollecting herself, said, with an effort:

"How you startled me, Michael!"

"Guilty conscience, madam," he said with a light laugh. "It is evidently time to look you up. This next waltz is mine, isn't it?"

Barbara stared at his audacity. This was something new, but presently she answered calmly, "I think not," and shaking a little white and silver book from its entanglement in her bouquet, she consulted it carefully as though his name might be found in it. "Here is an N. L. at this waltz."

"Eh—that's me," said the tall Scotchman.

"I expect it is," said Barbara. "This is Captain Neil Lennox, Michael—a cousin of mine. Captain Lennox Mr. Trehanna."

"Very glad to see another cousin of my wife's, Captain Lennox," said Michael heartily. "They have sprung up like mushrooms on the Trehanna side lately, but you are the first on the Lennox side."

"There's a detachment of seven at home," said Lennox, laughing; "but I dare say some of the fellows here would be quite willing to act as proxy."

"Delighted," said Captain Douglas. "Mrs. Trehanna may command a troop of cousins at any time. We are all ready for enrolment."

While the group were exchanging laughing repartee Trehanna took a casual step towards Lennox.

"Mottram told me that his father had introduced a relative to my wife," he said. "It will be a great pleasure to her to know something more of her mother's family. I hope we shall see you at Trehanna. Are you making any stay here?"

No one could be more thoroughly courteous than Squire Trehanna when he chose, and Lennox responded as cordially as he had been addressed.

"It is a pity that your rights to this waltz are so incontestably clear," continued Trehanna, smiling. "I had been counting on it with Barbara, but an unfortunate husband is in the minority in the troop of cousins."

"Of course your right comes first," said Lennox, a little stiffly; "but—"

"Ah, thank you. You will let Barbara give you another. She'll manage it somehow. By the way, couldn't you and the Mottrams make out our place next week? We can

put you up, you know, if you don't mind the ghost of departed grandeur."

"I'll talk to Mottram. Many thanks."

Then Michael Trehanna turned to his wife with a peculiar look of exultation and determination.

"Barbara, Lennox cedes his rights in this waltz to me. You must find him another. They are just beginning, I think," and he offered his arm.

Barbara had enough to do to preserve her presence of mind, and not to betray the real footing on which they stood.

"What is this for?" she asked calmly, as they walked up the room. "I have no need for charity dances. I thought you only wished to keep me from disgracing you as a wallflower. You need not sacrifice yourself."

"I won't," he said. "But this is rather a public occasion for a fight. We'll put it off."

As he spoke he put his arm round her waist, and her hand rose mechanically to his shoulder. He drew a quick breath for one moment, and changed color. Barbara noticed it; her face was so close to his that the soft perfume of her hair fanned his cheek.

"Is there a pin at my waist?" she asked, as they moved off.

"No; why?".

"I thought you had pricked your fingers."

"Metaphorically, yes! Physically, no."

He had never been so close to Barbara yet, and the thought may have crossed him that those who saw the married pair would hardly guess that the husband had never before held his wife in his arms.

They had not taken many turns before Barbara recognized that none of her partners would bear comparison with her husband as a waltzer. The easy, graceful swing

of strength and skill, and exact step to the measure, were a delight to her. They seemed to float round the room on wings to the music.

"You *do* dance well," she said presently, almost unconscious that she was speaking aloud.

"We are just the right height," he answered; "we suit exactly. You are not tired?"

"No—oh, no."

"It is like a dream," he said presently (perhaps remembering Lady Branscombe's words of before), and looking down on this other, fairer face, so near his own. "You are the dream, Barbara, that does not fight nor detest me, or beat her wings to be free,—but just spreads them enough to float off with me to a place where there is no strife. I'm so tired of quarrels, aren't you?"

"Tired enough," said she. "But let us forget, if we can."

"When I'm away, Barbara," he said presently, "and you think back on our short time together, forget the fights and remember our only waltz together, will you?"

"Yes, oh—it is over," and the music ceased, and with it the charm.

Just then Mottram came up to remind Barbara that he was next on her list, and glancing up at Michael's face quizzically, said:

"Got your inkstand, Trehanna?"

Trehanna smiled and patted his waistcoat pocket, as though he habitually furnished himself with writing materials to go to a ball. Barbara looked questioningly at Mottram.

"His inkstand?" she said.

"Has he actually put on his waistcoat without it?" asked Mottram. "Has he by this time entrusted the precious relic to your care, Mrs. Trehanna?"

"I don't know anything of any particular inkstand," she said.

"What a close old boy he is! I suppose he'd say he didn't want to gas; but it got to be a regular thing among the fellows to ask Trehanna for his inkstand."

"Why was that?"

"Well, it's a gorgeous kind of scarlet and gold arrangement—given him, I believe, by some fellow that died. Sort of flat metal thing, you know. And he always took this thing with him ready for his reports for the papers at home. And the first time he got into trouble with the thing was down in the Soudan. We were just going to turn in, I remember—I was half dead with sleep,—and Trehanna took off his coat, and then sung out that he'd lost his ink-bottle. I was too sleepy to care or to listen, but he went on about his old inkbottle till I shied a boot at him. And then he went out, saying he knew where he'd left it and he'd go and fetch it. It was in a place we had abandoned some hours before—an old heap of ruins. The idea of going off across the desert alone in the moonlight, in a region just crawling with the unrighteous, in order to fetch an ink-bottle, was about the craziest you ever heard. I got so mad at him that there was no sleep left in me; so I just got hold of two fellows as ready for a moonstruck spree as Trehanna, and we went after him. It was a good double-quick march of an hour before we got up to the place where Trehanna should be, and we heard a kind of scuffling and swearing going on somewhere, and climbed up a big block wall to look over. We looked straight into Trehanna's face down on the other side. There was he with an Arab whom he had pinned to the wall. He had got a revolver against the Arab's forehead, and he was holding his inkbottle open at the fellow's mouth—warning him in two or three lingoes that either

the bottle or his brain-pan must be emptied in two seconds.

"We roared with laughter, as the poor wretch caved in and swallowed the ink, and then we dragged off Trehanna, abusing him the whole way. It seems that the Arab had spied the gorgeous red and gold of the inkstand earlier in the day, and had stolen back later without his companions to loot it. Trehanna came upon him just in time, and they had a stand-up fight for it. But Trehanna complained that the chap wouldn't fight fair, and dragged a knife into the business, and he had to teach him to leave his bottle alone for the future, and produced the revolver. First he assured the fellow that the bottle contained a poison so deadly that it would send him straight to Gehenna, and then he made him drink it. We expected to be potted at on the road home; but instead of that we heard sounds immediately which convinced us that the ink was disagreeing with the Arab, which allowed us to get back safely."

Barbara laughed. There was a spice of daredevil whimsicality in the story which appealed to a certain reckless, inconsequent side of her own nature. The Trehanna whom she knew—gloomy, irritable, and selfish—was so different.

"As if that were not enough bother about his inkstand he gave us another little episode some time later on," continued Mottram, seeing that he had secured an appreciative audience. "One day we were all surprised by a skirmishing party of Fuzzies when we weren't expecting them. I, for one, was trying to cook, and Trehanna was writing. There was a rush and a scramble to and fro all over the place, and the fight, which was a pretty fierce one, swept on towards the south, and all the time that mad fellow, Trehanna, was groping round after his inkbottle. It had got knocked over, I suppose, and the last thing I saw of him, he was grubbing about in the sandy scrub, regardless

of knives or bullets or friend or foe, in the very midst of the row. He was given up for lost, as well as many another fine fellow, and it was near daylight next morning when he staggered into our camp with young Grey, of the —th, on his shoulders. He was looking like a ghost—and well he might, for we were leagues away from where we had left him.

“Here, somebody take off this chap and call the doctor,” said he. “I’ve had him on like a great-coat for the last few hours, and he’s pretty bad. He fell right on the top of my inkbottle, so I picked him up.”

“Trehanna’s very strong, but it had taken it out of him considerably, and when we tried to get Grey off we found that Trehanna’s own blood, from a wound in the shoulder, had stuck them literally together.

“Got my inkstand, though,” said he, and fainted dead off. He was awfully ashamed of ‘making an ass of himself,’ as he called it, when we brought him to. Grey owed his life to him, though.”

Barbara’s eyes dilated, and she breathed quicker.

“Did the other—did Mr. Grey tell how it was?”

“Oh, he was insensible almost when Trehanna picked him up. He came to himself again on the road, and got a drink from a flask Trehanna had; and he always declared that he fought to be let down, insisting that they would both be sacrificed by Trehanna’s pigheadedness, and that he knew he had got his death, anyway. He cuffed Trehanna’s ears and laid on all he knew, so he said. Trehanna maintained that it was all foolishness, that Grey was off his head, and had no more strength than a cat. You know Trehanna was just as likely to cuff *his* ears for making a fuss of it. Do you recognize your husband, Mrs. Trehanna?”

She did not, but she would not say so.

"It ought to be written out," she said: "The Saga of the Ink-bottle."

"Yes, I wonder the precious relic is not hung round your necks, set in diamonds, Mrs. Trehanna."

"Perhaps diamonds are scarce in Trehanna in these days," she said lightly.

"That's why he wants to be off to the wars again, I suppose," replied Mottram. "He was telling me that he did not feel worth his salt if he did not earn it."

Barbara was puzzled what to reply. How to explain to a man who supposed husband and wife to be still deeply in love with one another, that they cordially detested each other instead.

Fortunately the music called them to their places among the dancers, and her silence was not remarked.

Trehanna was standing in a recess as the dancers swept by, and two people—man and woman—came to a standstill near him where they could not see him in the shadow.

"What a lovely girl that Mrs. Trehanna is!" said the foolish man, daring to praise one woman to another.

"Lovely! Oh well, that red hair is the fashion just now, I believe. I wonder how much of it is her own. Do you remark that some of the coils are lighter than others? Bad taste to pile on quite so much—one can't believe in it *all*, you know."

"I didn't mean that, so much as her general appearance. Perhaps the whiteness of her skin makes her complexion so remarkable."

"Oh, I dare say the freckles don't show at night. Red-haired people always have that kind of skin. I've heard that it is scrofulous as a rule. She looks awfully naked. Quite disgusting."

"I don't see that—why, her gown is just as modest as that of anybody else here. More so than some, in fact."

"But her neck. That's what I mean. Not a string of beads or a scrap of jewelry or anything else on it. She wants to show off the whiteness and shape, I suppose. She looks half-dressed, *I think.*"

"Why—for want of jewels? Poor thing! perhaps she hasn't any."

"Poor thing, indeed! A woman with lace worth a hundred pounds on her! But it is our turn," and away they went.

So that was the way his wife was appraised. Trehanna muttered something the reverse of a blessing on her candid critics, and his thoughts went back to the emeralds, wondering what had become of them. He would inquire into that.

When the time came for departing, Trehanna muttered a few more blessings on the fools who danced round her to see her to the carriage. Two or three men were kicking their heels in the vestibule when Barbara appeared cloaked for her long drive.

Over her head she had tied a *fichu* of the rippling Indian silk and lace—and the lovely face, with a stray tendril of bright hair, loose here and there on her forehead, the brown eyes a little shadowed by fatigue, and the beautiful oval of her cheek defined by the opal lights of the kerchief, had something almost unearthly in its beauty.

They were among the earliest to go; and the discontent among Barbara's admirers at her departure was as evident as strict politeness would allow—even beyond these bounds, perhaps.

But even the "jolliest hop" must come to an end at last as one of the men remarked; and the Trehannas drove away.

CHAPTER XIX

"WELL, Barbara," said her husband, "did you enjoy it?"

"Oh, yes, thank you. I didn't disgrace you so conspicuously by my forlorn and neglected condition as you expected, did I?"

"That is rather an ungenerous speech, I think."

"Why?" and Barbara blushed crimson.

"You are for ever slashing at a puppet of your imagination, supposed to represent my opinion of you. Suppose I did that! Suppose I painted a picture of Michael Trehanna as you see him, and then sneered at it and you. I dare say, if the truth were known, you made up your mind to a supreme contempt for me at the first, and will stick to your prejudice through thick and thin to the end."

Barbara was silent. What she had heard of him that night was totally out of keeping with any thought or knowledge she had of him; in fact, at first she had thought very little about him. Since her coming to Trehanna a strange struggle between her own practical, straightforward nature and a something in herself which had grown in power, not by slow degrees, but by sudden, overwhelming waves, from time to time, had taken up soul and mind. She was conscious even now of a slipping away of thought and sensation into a sort of dream. With an effort she roused herself.

"No," she said, "no contempt; but you may be far

stronger, more real than I thought. How can I know you when I—really, I don't know myself?"

"I think I am pretty real," said Trehanna, with a laugh. "Pretty much what I seem to be; but one might certainly be forgiven for not understanding you."

Suddenly he let the window down in the moonlight, exclaiming: "Is there anything wrong, or is it only the moon which makes you so deadly white, Barbara?"

She leant towards the opening, drawing long breaths. He opened the other window, and then the whole side of the carriage.

"Are you better?" he asked, bending over her. "Talk about being real, you look more like the ghost of Dame Gillian than the living semblance of Dame Barbara. What is it?"

"Oh, just a headache, I think," she said, drawing back from him.

"You must be in pain to change like that. I believe it is that white thing on your head that makes you look ill; it has a kind of luminous look in the shadow."

She put up one hand to push it from her face, but he had reached across and drawn it back till it lay on her neck. In doing so his hand brushed the soft cheek, and the stud of his shirt-cuff became entangled in the lace. He had to change his place to one beside her to disentangle it. His face was bent close to her in the imperfect moonlight, and his fingers appeared almost to tremble. He lifted his eyes stealthily to the velvety chin, so close, then to a pink mouth, slightly compressed with some emotion. Pain or anger? Then, as if drawn by some magnet, his eyes looked full into hers. Soft, shadowy eyes, which gazed dumbly, startled, into his for a moment—only a moment, for a quick tide of color surged over cheek and forehead, and with a petulant movement she snatched

the kerchief from her neck, for him to disentangle his stud at leisure. He looked up at her for an instant.

"What's the matter now? What were you afraid of, Barbara?"

She drew back in her corner.

"I don't like being touched that way; it tickled my cheek."

"Ha!" he ejaculated scornfully. "Among your many virtues, are you often accused of patience and good temper?"

"I? Am I bad-tempered?"

"What do you think yourself? But you say you don't know yourself; so who can know you?—certainly not I."

She was silent again, and the carriage passed the last corner leading to Carvarron, and turned towards Trehanna proper.

Barbara's eyes sought the bare heather and furze-covered ridges higher up; the dreamy, far-away look came back to her face. Her hand silently took the kerchief which her husband had given back to her, and raised it mechanically, brushing the soft hair back from her brow.

"Have they left off working Carvarron now?" she asked.

"I believe—not quite," said Michael, slightly confused. "They ought, I know. It is just throwing good money after bad; but it is hard to give up hope. I will refund the money to you somehow, Mrs. Trehanna."

It was the first time he had addressed her so, and she looked haughtily inquiring at him.

"I never forget that it is your money employed on the estate," he replied in answer, "and that I, practically, have no right to speculate in mining with it. If it were mine . . ."

“Is that why you take so little interest in the spending of it? You don’t feel worth your salt unless you earn it.”

She was remembering Mottram’s words.

He looked up quickly.

“Yes, of course,” he said; “I did not marry for money for myself, but that Trehanna might have money.”

“Ah, Trehanna!” she sighed; “I wish I had never seen it. It swallows up everything—hope, and love, and happiness, and I feel as old and worn as if a long life lay behind me. What would I care for the money if I could only be the free, happy girl I was!”

“Your age and care come on you suddenly,” he said, “after leaving such a gay ball behind you.”

He glanced up as he spoke, and his face changed.

“In Heaven’s name, Barbara, take that thing off!” he cried passionately. “You have it on again, and it makes you look deathlike. It is horrible,” and—not stopping for permission, or heeding any mood of anger she might develop—he tore it off and flung it to the other side of the carriage, and gripped her arm as he looked her full in the face. “Rage, if you like,” he said, “but there is something in that stuff which is hateful to me. You shall not wear the damned thing. Mind—I am your husband.”

She looked up at him with the faint, pink curves of her parted lips drooping like those of a scolded child, instinctively putting her two hands together as if to shrink from him.

“There! I beg pardon—I said a bad word, didn’t I? But I am not going to beat you just yet, so you need not look so frightened. Here we are,” and he lifted her out with an authority he had never shown before, but which seemed, somehow, perfectly natural.

The night was pretty far advanced, but, thanks to the early country habits of the Wearne Place ballgivers, there

was still an hour or two to daylight, and Barbara and her husband could still say "Good night" to each other.

Deane had lighted her mistress up to her room, and laid the despised kerchief of Indian silk on the dressing-table, saying:

"You left it in the carriage, ma'am."

Her finery taken off, Barbara sent away the woman (lady's-maid she had none), and stood in her white dressing wrapper before the window, her long coils of hair unbound, and in her hand, gleaming in the moonlight, the silken kerchief, from which the perfume so well known to its owner began again to rise.

Why did Michael hate it so? She put it on her head, and turned to see herself in the mirror.

It seemed very becoming, she thought; but she was tired, paler than usual.

How bright the moonlight was, and how clearly the bare ridge of Carvarron stood out against the sky! She rose and went to the window.

A sharp headache again, and a shuddering nausea assailed her.

Leaning back in the deep embrasure of the window, she waited for it to pass. She had felt it before, but never so strongly.

Five minutes passed—ten—and still she leant with a deathly face against the window.

If she could have seen herself then, she might have understood Michael's exclamation at the change in her.

But she was leaning forward with her eyes fixed on Carvarron ridge, with a curiously intent face, as though listening, or trying to recall or understand something.

Outside the window, crouched on the wooden balcony, Lion gave a shivering, stifled howl, but she took no heed.

Glancing round presently, she took her candle and passed

out of the room to the long gallery, a shining, deathlike apparition in long, white, trailing garments.

Along the gallery into the great library, all stacked from floor to ceiling with books, then into a smaller room like it, and here, candle in hand, she hunted and searched in every shelf and cupboard. Turning at last, in seeming despair, to a small anteroom which, furnished with desk, shelves, and some plain wooden chairs, might have been used as a steward's room, she paused beside the fireplace—bare and empty this many a day—and, passing her hand along the wainscoting, pushed a round spot, and a small cupboard-door opened, black and worm-eaten.

Within were books piled together—something like account-books—but all dingy and time-stained.

"None red," sighed Barbara, taking up the top one. As she lifted it, however, the one below showed a brighter color than its yellow-brown back would have promised, and in tarnished letters on its cover she read the word "Mappee."

A little exclamation of joy escaped her, and, setting down the candle, she opened the yellowed pages. Here were curious bird's-eye views of the old house of Trehanna, with queerly-spelt names, and the park, the shore, the roads and grounds all marked with the utmost fidelity.

With feverish haste she turned the pages.

Ah! there was Carvarron Castle, the church, and the chase—all neglected and ruined now. Higher up the pages were the small, round dots marking the shafts of the mine. Lines marking the already explored copper vein, and here—a red spot: "Shut Pit."

She had sunk into a chair to see better—deep in the book. Her candle was burning low in its socket. She had pushed back the kerchief which hung loose on her neck as she read a footnote which seemed of absorbing interest, below the

Carvarron map, and presently started up, with gleaming eyes, to confront her husband. He was half dressed, candle in hand, and on his face a stern, raised look such as a man wears when he faces an unknown foe.

"In the name of God—" he began, when the figure at which he looked gave a cry, and sunk, half weeping, half laughing, on its knees at the table.

The look of awe faded out of Michael's face as he realized that here was no unearthly visitant haunting the library, and making the sounds just above his head which had brought him to investigate.

It was his wife. The dense, drawn look and sharpened features which had seemed so ghostlike were not traceable in the face which raised itself at his touch.

Flushed with some unexplained and glad emotion, her eyes shining through happy tears, her glorious, unbound hair hanging in heavy masses across her white figure—such a Barbara as this Michael had never seen. He looked at her bewildered, shaken out of himself.

"Oh, Michael! Michael!" she cried, clasping his arm with both her hands in her eagerness, "I've got the red book at last." Her overflowing delight spoke in all her face. "Look! here it is! And the copper—we shall get it back. I can show you the spot"; and she held up the book triumphantly, pointing to the big red dot. "Above Treeby river—shut and built up. What it is like now, I don't know. But the copper! See the footnote!"

Michael looked at her and the book.

"Copper in a book. Child, are you asleep and dreaming? What does this mean?" and his eyes searched her face for explanation. "What are you doing here at night?"

"Night?" she said. "Look at the dawning!" and, sure enough, the great, ghostly windows were growing clear with morning light.

To an older woman, less purely fresh in the whiteness of skin and clearness of eye than Barbara, the early dawn would have been disadvantageous enough; but she was too thoroughly absorbed in her good news to think of anything else, much less what she looked like.

"Dawning of good fortune for Trehanna, too. Don't you see? The copper was lost; you said yourself that it was there—below our feet, somewhere. Here, in this map of Carvarron, you can see where it really is. It was shut for the future good fortune of Trehanna. It says: 'The pit called Bodda Pit, being so rich, it hath seemed well to us to close the mouth above Treeby, called Treeby Pit, by reason of the ore becoming too plentiful for present need. And if the master of the mine speak sooth, there shall be no need to reopen Treeby Pit for the space of one hundred years. Such store of copper is in Mine Bodda. Therefore, let them that come after me take heed that the mouth of Treeby Pit be not betrayed till the appointed time.'"

"But," said Michael, "what book is this? How did you get it?"

"I searched and searched," said Barbara; "I knew there was such a book—a sort of Trehanna guide-book, almost called the 'red book'—but only to-night I thought of a place where it might be."

"But *how* did you know a thing that I, born here, did not?"

"I heard, or remembered, or something," she faltered quailing a moment before his sternly scrutinizing glance; "but," gaining courage again, "what does that matter? The thing is, that you will have the copper—your own; Trehanna will live again, and I have not given myself for nothing. It will make up for the trouble and wrong." She paused breathless, her eyes hung on his, her whole

figure seemed alive with the certainty of what she tried to convince him.

"But because there are two pits, or were—how many years ago, I don't know—it does not follow that they are not both exhausted. This book was not drawn up yesterday, I suppose."

"No—no—by Sir Bevill and—and Dame Gillian. We—it was made very slowly, but—but we saw all the old workings on our wedding day. Was there one so far east as Treeby? No—no—there was none. But we will go and see."

"My dear child! you're off your head, or we both are, to be standing here in this costume at this hour. By George! if the maids find us here! Have you been to bed at all?"

"No; I—I was thinking, and this old story of the copper kept me awake, and—but I am not a bit tired. When can we go?"

She was standing close to him, her shining eyes fixed on him like stars, her lips parted in expectation—so utterly unconscious of her loveliness and the strangeness of her position that Michael checked back words that came almost from his lips; the two hands he stretched out towards her merely grasped one of hers, and put it on his arm as he drew her towards the door.

"First of all, *rest*. What would the copper be worth if you caught a fever or some such thing? Why, your hands are like ice. Come," and he led her along the gallery to her own door. "Two hours' rest, at least. Then, after breakfast, we'll go if you like. Lend me the book, though," and as he took it he bent his face very near her own. She drew back in surprise, and he turned hastily, saying, "Good night."

Squire Trehanna did not try to sleep. It would have

been useless. He examined the red book from cover to cover. He had never heard of it before, and there was no addition in a later hand or sign that it had been in use of late, though so yellowed with age that the writing was hard to decipher, for it was not printed.

Indeed, with the exception of the names on the map and one or two footnotes, there was no letter-press at all. But there was no doubt of the authenticity of the work. There were changes in Trehanna since that time, or errors in the original map; for in one place a river's course, the very Treeby river of which Barbara had spoken, was differently marked. It stood in the book as following a winding valley through Treeby village from Carvarron height to the sea—whereas it, in reality, fed the lake in Trehanna grounds, and fell over the cliff at a place marked in the map as "Steppes."

There was no sign of a lake in the red book; but all else, with the exception of a few fences and divisions of fields, was practically a map of Trehanna and Carvarron in geographical and architectural accuracy.

It was possible enough that the copper might be there; and, if so, the mortgage might be removed, a prospect of real affluence be held out to Trehanna's master, and surely the dearest wish of his heart bestowed upon him. But even with all this prosperity in view his thoughts did not remain on the copper. His steps up and down his room quickened and his brow puckered as he muttered:

"Idiot I was, and fool I am, but I don't see light anywhere. Hang all the mystery and reserve! Some promise of some kind, perhaps. I've been a brute to her. I always had a devil of a temper; but—but I believe she has, too." And the Squire of Trehanna grinned as though the remembrance of something was pleasant to him. Not for long, however, did his reflections prove pleasant; for his brow

clouded and his steps grew slower and more dejected as time went on, and when he appeared at breakfast it was by no means in an exuberantly joyful condition.

Barbara was far brighter. She was evidently full of hope, and already clad in a riding-habit. Merely a rough country costume, but sufficient to show the neat figure of its wearer.

"You thought I was a ghost, Cousin Michael," she laughed, "I am sure you did, when you saw me in the steward's room at such an eerie hour."

"I believe I did," he said, chipping his egg, "and I am not quite sure now that you are not."

"Well, for a ghost, I've an uncommonly real appetite," she said. "I feel as if I had eaten nothing for a week."

"Ah! it's the practical side of you that wants breakfast," he said; "but how do I know but that a spectral double may be flitting about up-stairs, with a glistening white thing on its head, making a natural man's flesh to creep?"

"Fortunately, there's no natural man there. But when Captain Lennox comes it might be a satisfaction to him that the Lennox traditions of ghostly aptitude hold good."

"Ah! he keeps a family ghost or two, does he?"

"I believe so; but he was telling me of second sight in the Highlands. It is very interesting."

"H'm!—awful pullers of the longbow, Highlanders. Does he dabble in that kind of thing himself now?"

"Not that I know. But why is it considered necessary to have such a contempt for a—a rather unusual gift?"

"Probably because the gift usually consists in truth peculiarly like lying. By the way, though, second sight might account for your extraordinary knowledge, dreams and that kind of things, mightn't it?"

Barbara's face changed.

"Why—do you say that?" she asked.

He looked at her altered expression in surprise.

"Why not?" he asked. "You are not troubled at being taken for a *bona fide* specter, if such a thing could be. Why should you trouble at the soft impeachment of kinship with the witches and warlocks of the North?"

"Do you think there really is such a thing as second sight, now—in every-day life?"

"How do I know? I suppose it is well to have boundaries to one's faith somewhere, but rolling about the world has made such a hash of my reasonable convictions that I could not produce one that is not shaky."

He was evidently not to be brought to speak seriously, Did she wish it?

"Well, when you are ready, Michael."

"All right. I'll just fetch that book; here are the horses."

She turned to a side-table, on which, on entering, she had laid the felt hat which she usually wore on horseback. It was not there; but Lion, who was extended his full length in a patch of sunlight beside the table, rose, wagging his tail at his mistress's approach, and, as he swept the table with every "wag," he explained with great distinctness how her hat came to be on the floor crushed into a kind of cockade.

There was no time to do more than snatch up the hat, with an exclamation of "Oh, Lion, you great clumsy thing!" and be off to her room for another headgear, and she presently returned wearing the light straw hat trimmed with Indian silk.

They had a long ride before them, for Treeby parish is the utmost boundary of Carvarron and Trehanna, laying along the shore. They consulted first as to whether they

should ride along Carvarron ridge to take men from the small remaining band of miners to help in the search.

"No, no," said Barbara nervously. "Suppose if we were to be all wrong—if the whole thing has been found and worked dry. Just think how many years of mining have gone on, and how many tons of copper have come out of Carvarron pits. That map was right enough when it was made; but, as you said, since then who can tell what has happened?"

"So your familiar spirit hasn't taken stock all this time since it drew that map?" laughed Trehanna.

"No."

"Culpable laxity."

"I suppose you disbelieve the whole thing, Cousin Michael, and think that I am a superstitious fool, don't you?"

"No, Cousin Barbara, I don't. I reserve my opinion. Don't you see that if you are wrong, you are just as human and likely to err as the rest of us, and I need not feel quite so much like an ordinary black beetle beside a butterfly; but if you are right, we get the copper and you a reputation which will beat that of any witch or diviner in the county. As it is, you know you are keeping your sources of information a secret. I don't bother you about them; but I suppose you will explain some day *your theory* of how you got to know about the red book and the candlesticks."

Barbara's face was averted and her cheeks were white.

"I ought not to have let you out after your fatigue," said Michael; "you look ready to drop off your horse."

"No, no," she said. "Can you open the book? Look! We have crossed Treeby river, and yet here is a long comb which might have been its bed according to the map. This comb goes down to Treeby village on the sea. On the other side of the river was a ridge just below

the Devil's Finger. Look; there it is!" And she pointed to a sharp upright rock on the ridge above them.

Michael looked at the map.

"Yes, the pit-mouth should be in a straight line below the Devil's Finger, and—"

"Come, come along!" she cried joyously, her horse bounding under her. "Here is the old road"; and having crossed the depression, which, sooth to say, was fit enough to be a river's bed, she galloped up the ridge on the other side, and, before Michael could help or hinder, had slid from her horse and slipped the bridle over the branch of an old oak which was stunted and blasted with age and weather.

Barbara stood, looking anxiously, vacantly from one side to the other. The wind, which had been blowing keenly on the other side of the hill, had abated of its strength in the hollow, and the old aromatic scent of the Indian silk came faintly to her nostrils. Her eyes widened.

"Why, of course," she murmured. "Turning Treeby water, and it came as high as this; and they cursed the hand that did it, and the curse held."

She turned and walked slowly up the bare rocky track, stopping at last before a line of dark stone running in an oblique direction. Heather, hardy mosses, and fallen masses of rock lay at its base. Barbara stopped, turned off the track below the rocks, and to the left came upon a sort of level encumbered with dwarf vegetation and rocks and mossy hillocks.

Here Michael found her, breathlessly pushing through bramble and thorn, trying to separate gnarled ancient branches lying against a low line of rock. Was it rock? A cry escaped her.

"A wall, Michael, a wall!" she cried. "It is here! I know it is here!"

"Come back," he cried hoarsely, as a crash followed her exclamation, "for God's sake, Barbara! If it should be hollow!"

A light laugh answered:

"No, no—a wall all round, and hillocks of earth and old trees hiding it."

He came nearer, and, drawing her away by a vise-like grip she could not resist, said:

"Stay there in the path! I *won't* have you here. Do you hear?"

Then he returned again to the spot.

Barbara, on a ridge of rising ground close by, followed his movements with devouring eagerness. Yes. The stonework was made of loose pieces; some already fallen.

What was behind the bushes—old beams of wood? Yes, and a sunken mass which might have been a pit-head wheel; but the weeds, the hillocks, and the tangle made certainty difficult.

He came back with a grave face, looking at Barbara with piercing eyes, and then said:

"Yes, I believe this is the shut mouth—Treeby Pit."

Barbara sat down, put her hand before her face, and shivered.

"Queer," said Michael.

He turned round again and looked at the place. "I'm damned if I understand it all!" he muttered between his teeth, while he pulled at his mustache. A moment more, and he was saying carelessly:

"Well, we had better be off, I expect, unless you are too tired."

"Yes," said a faint, almost toneless voice; and he saw Barbara, with her hat off, leaning back against the rock with closed eyes. Even while he looked at her the brow smoothed itself, the faint quiver about the lips ceased,

the blue shadows beneath the eyes seemed to vanish, and the fresh girl face seemed to awake to sunshine again.

"You feel faint," he said, and, kneeling beside her, poured some brandy from his pocket-flask into the cup and put it to her lips.

She took half a mouthful and gasped, putting it from her, "Oh! no more. It is fire!" and scrambled to her feet.

"It is the wrong time to faint now, Barbara, when you have brought fortune back to Trehanna; for it will all be your work."

"If it should be still unworked here," she said. "But let us go; it is a horrible place."

"Horrible? Why? I hope not. But you are tired out. Here's your hat."

"I can't put it on," she said; "my head's splitting. I can remember and think best with that hat on, I think; but I prefer a little blank idiocy for a while to this."

"But how will you ride home without it? Would you rather stay here and rest? You know I mean to cross the moor from here to Bodda Pit and give the men directions, or, better still, come back with them to show them this."

"Yes, I know. Oh! I can't stay here. Have you a pocket-knife?"

Amazed, he handed her one, and watched while she hastily ripped off the ripply-looking silk from her hat and put the hat on without it.

This done, she rolled the silk tightly into a little ball (evidently struggling with a deadly nausea as she did so), and then asked, as she handed back the knife:

"Would you mind putting this in your pocket? I—I think the scent makes my head ache."

"Scent!" he said, approaching it to his nose. "I've been smoking, but I don't detect the faintest smell. I don't like the thing somehow—creepy-looking stuff. How-

ever, here it goes into my pocket; it's just as likely as not to have a lively remembrance of cheroots when it comes out."

As they rode home, the color came back to Barbara's cheek, and the light to her eye; and when they reached the workmen at Bodda there was not the smallest fear for such a hardy horsewoman to return alone to Trehanna while Michael took the men back to Treeby mouth.

It took some time to clear the pit entrance and make excavations possible, and they were anxious hours and days; but at last the news flew from mouth to mouth that Carvarron copper was found again, and in a richer vein than Bodda had ever shown.

CHAPTER XX

'So Trehanna's palmy days are to return, eh?' said Arthur Trehanna, some days later, as he sat on the terrace with Barbara.

(The Squire had arrived only after his cousin's visit had already been prolonged so much that Barbara wondered whether he meant to remain for the rest of his natural life.)

"And how about the war correspondence, and foreign travel?" continued Arthur.

"It will have to be limited by circumstances," quoth Michael, rather grimly. "There's plenty to do just now; I've fifty things that want superintendence."

"I'll do the war correspondence," said Barbara gaily, 'between this and London. Hester wants me to go and stay with her for a while, Michael."

A quick glance from Michael of distrustful surprise did not escape Arthur.

"There will be an awful lot of things to get from town, of course," said the Squire of Trehanna evasively; "but we shall have to find out *what* before we commence the delightful task of shopping."

"Oh! do you want so much?" asked Barbara innocently.

"Well, that upper story is pretty bare, you know—and I should think your fingers would be itching by this time to get hold of real staring tapestry and uncomfortable furniture."

"But if you don't like that kind of thing," said Barbara coldly, "you can send an order to any modern upholsterer and get as much Victorian house-stuff as you like, and a man to arrange it."

That was self-evident. Arthur Trehanna looked at his teacup.

It was quite true, then, that husband and wife did not "get on."

What an inconceivably stone-blind idiot Michael Trehanna must be, not to recognize what a prize he had! Well, it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

"I shall have to go off to Liskeard to-morrow," said Michael; "there is a good deal to see about there, a man I want to get hold of for Treeby Pit."

"What a pity!" said Arthur; "Hester and I wanted to get you two to show us the place of your romantic wedding—Carvarron Church, wasn't it?"

(He had never thought of it, nor Hester either, till he heard that Michael was to be away.)

"Tell Hester to come to-morrow afternoon," said Barbara; "we'll make a picnic tea up there. Ought you to ask Lady Branscombe, though?"

"She's got an invitation somewhere, and wanted to take us in tow; but we'll cry off," mentally determining that Hester should do her duty by her hostess, and that he alone would turn up at Trehanna.

"Perhaps I might put off Liskeard till next day," said Michael gloomily.

"Oh, don't inconvenience yourself," said Barbara; "we can find the road quite well."

Michael took no notice of this observation.

"Are you riding, or—or—how?"

"We have no saddle-horses," said Arthur.

"Our little light dogcart will just do," said Barbara.

Michael's nostrils trembled for a moment, and his mouth took a firmer set, under his mustache.

Arthur thought it a beautiful plan. He and Barbara in front, Hester—or nobody—behind.

"No, you don't," said Michael, after he was gone.

"Do you know the reputation our polite cousin bears in London, Barbara?"

"Which one?"

"Do you mean which cousin?"

"Yes."

"Arthur Trehanna."

"No; how should I? You introduced us."

"Quite true; but I did not know then that it would be necessary for me to look after *your* reputation."

"Oh! *please* don't trouble. I am not likely to disgrace your name; I am perfectly well able to look after myself."

"Even with a rejected lover?"

"What do you mean?"

"What's the good of pretending that Arthur never made an idiot of himself to you?"

"You are remarkably well informed."

"It is as well to know with whom one has to deal sometimes. False pretenses are apt to be dangerous."

"I don't think *you* should be the one to accuse people of false pretenses."

"Why not, if you please?"

"Could any pretense be more false than that under which you married me?"

"To others it might be," said Michael; "but you know perfectly well what our contract was."

"You said it was for the sake of Trehanna."

Michael changed color.

"I knew before I married you that it was for revenge," continued Barbara.

"Who told you that?"

"It does not matter. The revenge tasted very sweet—took away the savor of the unpalatable morsel you had to swallow. It was so pleasant, in fact, that it made you pardon the sin to be avenged, and regret the revenge when it was sated."

"That? No, never—by Heaven!"

"What need is there to deny it? If you can devise any means of displacing me and putting Lady Branscombe where you, and she, and Miss Griffith all long to see her, the sooner you do it the better."

"You are altogether wrong there. When I was ten years younger than I am to-day I was a fool. I thought Laura Carrol—well, what she isn't, and never was. She spoilt ten years of my life for me, and I'd prefer to keep the rest of it for myself."

"Is that what you were telling her at the ball?"

Michael's heart gave such a throb that he thought it had actually moved in his breast.

Barbara had observed him, then, in spite of her absorbing interest in Captain Lennox.

"But I beg your pardon," she went on hurriedly; "I never asked you for your confidence about other women. The relation in which we stand to each other fortunately does not require it, and I claim the liberty you promised me—that *Dame* Barbara should be even freer in her action than she was before. Only when you talk about false pretenses it is just *rather* much."

"It was not all false," said Michael quickly. "I grant that it was not all for Trehanna; but if it had not been for Trehanna I should simply have shut up the place or sold it."

"Well," said Barbara quietly, "you have been saved that. All you have to do now is to use your taste to make

it all you want. The little part I had in it—my poor little ghostly room, will soon be forgotten when I am gone."

A dangerous look came into Michael's eyes, but he controlled himself.

"Look here, Barbara," he said, "suppose we just sit down and talk this thing over quietly."

Barbara sat down on the nearest seat with aggravating meekness, her hands folded submissively in her lap.

Michael looked at her.

"I am not afraid of your meekness lasting long enough to injure your health," he said.

"There was a quick flash of Barbara's eye, and the faintest quiver round her mouth. Then silence for an instant.

"Are we going on with this quarrel, or are we not?" she asked presently, in an injured tone.

"Oh! go on," retorted Michael. "I say, how in the world did you get on in Penlooe with nobody to fight?"

"I never did fight, and I didn't want to. There is something here in this place that rubs me all the wrong way. I used to have a good temper."

"You a Trehanna, and have a good temper? Come!"

"It's quite true, though," said Barbara, with a sigh. "I could scarcely believe that any nature could get twisted and changed as mine has done in this short time. I don't know my own self."

"And I'm responsible for your iniquity, I suppose," said Michael grimly.

"N-no," said Barbara slowly; "a great deal that you have done, and not done, I might have expected, I suppose. I can't explain how it is that there is old grief and wrong and trouble in this house; it seems in the air somehow, and I get it all in me."

She stopped, expecting a jeer from him, but none came.

"What have I done, and not done, that you might have expected, but which you don't approve of?" he asked.

"I suppose I might have expected that you would support your aunt in her insulting treatment of me, and exact silence from me under torture."

"Torture!" he exclaimed contemptuously.

"You supposed that when you had once given me the keys, and once defended me against insult, all was done?" asked Barbara cuttingly.

"And?"

"Only now are added jeers, which she supposes to embody truth, about unhappy marriages and spoiled lives. She speaks of the intrusive familiarity of vulgar natures, who are unable to understand the shrinking of more noble beings from their contact. The difficulty you have in teaching me my place, etc."

"Barbara!" he cried, springing up, "I did not know."

"You did not want to know either, I should think. Why, not a day passes without some verbal message through her worthy handmaid which makes my blood boil, and which, if I do not use all my authority, would raise a revolt in the servants' hall."

He sat down again wearily, ready to let the flood pass over his head.

Barbara saw the impression and was silent.

He looked up.

"Well," he said, "go on."

"It is not worth while. It will be over when I go."

"And you think that like a coward I stood aloof and let you bear all this?"

"Yes," she said, with set teeth.

"I suppose I have deserved all this; but it is hard to bear. Do you think I *knew* all this?"

"No," said Barbara, "perhaps not all. But when your

—when Lady Branscombe came smilingly and lashed me with her tongue, it did not occur to you to stand by the comrade you had promised to defend."

"Ah! there it was not indifference," he said. "Perhaps you will find it hard to believe that I was waiting to get the certainty from her own tongue that she was the author of a certain communication which had reached me anonymously, and which I duly punished."

"A written slander?" cried Barbara, "and against me?"

"It seems," said he, "that you kept the knowledge to yourself that I had once been engaged to marry Laura Carroll. I kept the knowledge to myself that you did not come to me with a free heart. I, at all events, had no regrets for my old love. You know best what part of you lies in the past."

"Then it seems *you* believed this slander?"

"I believed no slander against your name or reputation, nothing which could legally prevent your becoming my wife. But I believe that there is some past attachment, some feeling which still sways you so much as to be in a great measure responsible for your hatred of me."

Barbara looked at him, pale and troubled. From being the accused he had become the accuser, and he had put his case so that she scarcely knew how to answer him.

"Tell me what this slander was," she said, "then I can understand."

"Why need you hear that?" he replied. "It was pretty much the nonsense she reeled off to you, with an addition about a former lover—a sailor." His eyes were fixed piercingly on hers.

"Ah!" said Barbara, with a quick breath. "What did you do?"

"I made her understand that she had come to the wrong shop, but I could not question my wife at the instigation

of that woman, and I could not betray the meanness of the woman I once loved for public execration."

Barbara's eyes drooped. "I beg your pardon, Cousin Michael," she faltered.

"Damn *Cousin Michael!*" he cried, springing up. "Your husband Michael wants the truth now about your lovers."

She laughed. "My lovers! Why, I never had such a thing. Can you call any and every man a lover who takes it into his head, without my wish, to marry me?"

"Do you mean to tell me," retorted Michael, "that there is no image from the past in your mind which brings up to you, when you are alone, the most passionate feeling of regret and sorrow? If I had not seen you before the picture of Bevill Trehanna, and heard your words, and seen your tears, I might think myself mistaken. I don't suppose that you are moved to so much emotion at the painted face of an old ancestor if he has no living counterpart somewhere."

A look of intense fear and anxiety crept into Barbara's eyes.

A sharp pang pierced Michael's heart as he saw it.

"Ah! I am right," he said bitterly.

"No," said Barbara, raising her face presently, "all wrong as you mean it, but right in a way I can't explain. Oh, if I could explain, even to myself! It is a hard, hard burden to bear: it makes my life so old and weary."

"I wish you would try to tell me, Barbara," he said quietly. "I think it would make things easier for you and for me."

"Who can believe impossible things?" she said desperately.

"Well," said Michael calmly, "I've seen a good many things in rolling round the world, which I well know should be quite impossible, so I am not easily put off my sleep."

She was sitting at a little stone table on the terrace, and she leaned her head upon her hand and sighed.

Michael rose and walked up and down for a moment, and then paused beside her, leaning over her.

"Barbara," he almost whispered, "let me do what I can to help. Trust me, I am older than you are. I may be able to clear up your difficulty. I'll promise patience—no bad words—and I'll keep it too; but when that *Cousin* Michael comes in it drives me awfully wild."

She half smiled.

"Is there such a thing as inherited memory, do you think?" she asked half-shamefacedly.

"Instinct," he answered lightly,—"that comes nearest."

She shook her head. "No; that won't do. It won't account for experience."

"Tell me the experience," he said, half under his breath, seating himself as though accidentally on the stone bench—so close that it was rather a squeeze.

"I feel sometimes," she said hurriedly, as though wanting to get the confession over—"I feel sometimes as though I had inherited another memory. I see things that happened long ago, as if they had occurred when I was a child, and sometimes a whole life of trouble, whole stories of things that I never heard are as distinctly printed on my brain as if they had been that moment photographed. I forget to feel with my own feelings. My own likes and dislikes and my own knowledge get confused. I feel as if I were some one else—Michael, I . . . you don't think I am going mad?"

The horror in the beautiful dark eyes, the quivering of the paling lips, touched Michael to the quick.

"My poor child, no," he said; "tell it all," and she seemed not to notice the protecting arm round her waist.

"It has not always been so bad," she said; "I used to

remember queer historical facts, and could not account for my knowledge; but lately, since I have been here—" She stopped, her breath coming fast.

"Well?"

"Since I came here I know all that Dame Gillian knew—that is, all outstanding facts or feelings which lasted with her, or knowledge which was important to her; and she had a sad life, and Bevill Trehanna made it so. It takes me out of to-day; Barbara Trehanna is no one, and Gillian remains."

As she spoke she turned, and the dark, mysterious eyes, meeting his, thrilled cold through his veins—only for a moment.

"Good," he answered quietly; "these are previously unrecorded facts; we'll come to the proofs, and then draw our conclusions as to what natural law is in play."

A look of intense relief crept over her face.

"Oh, if you take it so," she sighed, "it takes away the fear, the horror of it. You know that I like things I can understand—I like to have to do with what I see. I never was sentimental and moonstruck. Just the most every-day kind of girl you could find—that's why I am so puzzled. Godmother thought it was clairvoyance, but it does not fit. I can't see the future. I can't see the years between, only what Dame Gillian saw. That is how I know of the candlesticks and of the red book, and I know how the hall used to be."

"And that picture of Sir Bevill . . ."

"Ah!" she said, "I don't look when I can help it. He stands there and smiles, with a ring from that Spanish woman on his finger—the woman who met her death in trying to take him from his wife—and he went carelessly enough, leaving his leman dead, and his wife dying."

The bitterness with which she spoke was a revelation to

Michael, more even than her story had been. It was a marvel how she identified herself with a woman dead three hundred years before.

His arm dropped from her waist. She had not heeded it apparently.

"And is there no way of liberating yourself from these—memories?" he asked, a shade more coldly.

"Liberating—aye—yes—perhaps," she answered, her thoughts evidently far away.

He looked sharply at her. Was it possible that only the shadow of suffering long dead could affect her so? If so, how quick must be the mysterious power which imparted the knowledge of the past!

Her experience, as she said, "did not fit" any theory he could hit on to account for it. There was a troubled look—a misty, weary expression on her face.

"Barbara," he said gently, "don't you think there is a natural way of accounting for these things by the traditions that you have got from your old nurse?"

She looked at him vaguely for a moment.

"I have tried that," she said, "but my nurse's stories were of little more than a hundred years ago. Of course there are traditions of all sorts of things in Trehanna—especially in the life of fair Annabel, the beauty of Charles II.'s Court. But I scarcely know anything about her. Betsey Truscoe told funny tales of her beauty, and a haunted looking-glass, and her husband's jealousy; but I don't know where her room was or what places she mostly liked, or her employments, or—or anything, while of Dame Gillian I know all. You have seen some things, but not half of what I could tell you, if you did not already feel that same kind of aversion and distrust that I have for myself."

Michael looked at the soft, sorrowful curve of the lips

near his. He put his arm very gently back to the place where it had been, and said quietly:

"Why should I feel aversion to you because you seem to be endowed with rather more knowledge, on very harmless subjects, than I? I don't suppose you are addicted to the black art because you know the story of Dame Gillian, and can—by putting yourself in her place in your mind—feel what she may have felt. Although you are so fond of repudiating all but the most practical side of your character, it is evident that you have a very vivid imagination, and what more there may be in it, in the magnetism of Gillian's ancient surroundings and a strong outward likeness, we must wait to see. It will be very interesting."

He had the satisfaction of seeing a more natural rose-tint warm the oval of her cheek, and her eye met his almost hopefully.

"Then you really think that it does not matter much, and that it is a sort of phase in one's mind which will probably go—or explain itself?"

"Well, if you look a thing straight in the face and consider it all over, it is never so bad as if you try to put it behind your back and always take frightened sidelong looks at it. I am ready to hear as much more about it as you like."

But something in his eye or his tone seemed to recall the real Barbara Trehanna to herself, or she felt the stolen pressure of the arm at her waist. She drew herself away with a quick blush, and a look half of fright, half mistrust.

"And to amuse yourself at the expense of the credulous country girl," she said, as her breath came quickly.

"Ah, there speaks the real Barbara!" he cried. "Do you remember that the country girl is *my wife?*"

"I remember that we agreed to look upon our contract

in a purely impersonal light," she said, "not marriage. And all our disagreements have come from the breaking of that rule. Personal feeling has always come in. I meant to marry a dead past Trehanna, and give it new life; you meant to marry a crude implement for the same end. I did wrong—I have brought a strange fate on myself—my life seems to be given, breath by breath, to a sort of vampire which takes all I can give, and leaves me poorer in strength and courage every day. To you there is a bright future open now, but for me . . . I am very tired."

The weariness of the whole figure, as she leaned in the twilight against the stone pillar behind her, needed no commentary. She spoke truth.

"Tired," echoed Michael, his voice taking a deeper tone in which some intense feeling vibrated. "Tired! well you may be of fighting alone against all that makes life worth having. You have made a cult of the past until it has rewarded you by isolating you from the living present. Barbara, why have you never anything but mistrust and bitterness for me? You have still smiles and confidence left to bestow on others."

"Because you are the only person in my life who ever took the trouble to point out to me plainly in how far I could be of use to him, while warning me as distinctly how far from himself was my proper distance."

"And you consider that I did that when I asked you to marry—"

"Trehanna," she interrupted, "and not any person at all."

He started up. "And when you accepted?" he said. "Can you never forget the insult to your pride when a man who cared nothing for women—nay, who came to you almost a stranger—asked alliance which would save him from a union as degrading as if he had chosen a woman

from the streets? I would as soon take a woman who had passed seven years of her life in shame, as one who had been seven years wife to that man Branscombe—and to save Trehanna, and buy myself a lifetime of ease, that degradation was pressed insistently upon me. Aye, open your eyes. It is plain speaking. Better so. I know that I am twelve years older than you, with few qualities to please a woman now, but when I asked you to marry me I put myself at a distance from you to reassure you that I demanded no wifely sacrifice or duty on your part—to me, unworthy. And you told me as plainly that you would give none."

He was very much agitated. His eyes flashed and his throat grew dry and husky.

"At all events," he went on, "I thought you were young and pure—your weakest as well as strongest side a kind of romantic pride in our old name. I had absolute trust in you and your stepfather—enough to put Trehanna entirely into your hands, and I meant to go away, having made one person happy and saved the old place from disgrace. How could I know that when you entered this house your character would change, and every thought and feeling flow into a mould broken three hundred years ago? The pride which is traditional, which resented any and every wrong, however slight, done to Dame Gillian, the resentment which made her a lonely woman, the mistrust which first created wrong in a husband who was by no means above suspicion afterwards, but yet willing to love (so old legends say) and anxious for forgiveness—all this seems to have entered into you; maybe the very moral atmosphere where Gillian lived is tainted so. It bids fair to make your life as sad as ever hers was. If you open your heart to such influence and shut it to all healthy God-given love, you may well tire and faint by the way."

Barbara's face had blanched, and her eyes looked up at him in the twilight almost beseechingly.

"Yes, you know it," she said. "It has been so. Barbara dies—Gillian lives. The old bright life flickers up sometimes, but it is going out."

She started up, holding out her hands.

"Oh, Michael, let me go! Trehanna is saved. There is no need of me. I want the old sunshine. I want to feel young again. Away from this it surely cannot follow me. Let me go away and forget everything."

He turned impetuously towards her, grasping her cold fingers with his strong, warm hands, and held them against his breast, and the dark-blue eyes with a strange fire in them sought hers.

"Go away?" he said in a low, anxious voice. "You can see no help but that? You, if you have looked so deep in the memory of those old lives, must have seen more than hate and mistrust. Can you feel no warmer breath from a sunshine that must have been glorious in its time—something that makes the heart and pulses leap, that warms the veins like fire, that opens the gates of paradise? Barbara, has nothing told you of *love?*."

His voice sank almost to a whisper, and the hands held against his breast felt a wild beating beneath them.

"There was *love* between those two where you only speak of sorrow. Do you see no beauty in it that you should desire it?"

She struggled to draw away her hands, but her eyes drooped beneath his, and a hot tide of crimson surged over her face and colored the white neck which bent to escape his gaze.

"Barbara, answer," he whispered.

To her struggles he had so far yielded as to draw her

hands from his breast, but he still held them tight, and looked with devouring eagerness at her lovely face

"You forget," she said, her face still crimson,—"I told you what I can see in her life. All great events, all overpowering sudden emotions, come back to me—but in waves. I see pictures, and feel as she felt for a moment, and then by questioning, dwelling on this strange inner light, I see facts and actions. But—" She hesitated and her voice sank. "But," she continued, struggling with a feeling of intense shame, "I do not like—I—I am Barbara still—I mean I am your wife, and the love of Gillian for her husband, and the feelings—and—what you have been saying—are not for me to see and dwell on. I *will* not give up my own inner self to memories of Bevill Trehanna and his love-making. I am Barbara," and she raised her head proudly. "If it be imagination, or memory, or magnetism—whatever it is that holds my soul in its grasp, there are bounds to its power."

He felt how she joined her hands together in his grasp.

"God keep me pure in thought and soul, and save me from the evil thing."

Almost a sob burst from the strong man's breast.

"My wife!" he said,—"my pure-hearted girl! I am a great rough brute, Barbara, but—I can understand."

He lifted her hands to his lips and pressed them one moment to his eyes, then dropped them, and moved away.

When he returned to the little tower seat Barbara was gone.

CHAPTER XXI

IT was written that the picnic tea at Carvarron should not take place.

That night fire broke out in Trehanna.

Barbara had not appeared at dinner.

The headache which confined her to her room was perhaps the consequence of a smothered excitement, which kept her walking up and down, up and down her own room, till, tired out, she sank down on a chair to rest.

It was moonlight. A cold, drizzling rain had driven Lion from his favorite place on the mat just outside her balcony door to his own kennel, which was, however, on the same balcony, communicating by a flight of steps with the old-fashioned, many-angled court below.

She had been sitting, wrapped in her dressing-gown, in a deep, cushioned chair, when a low growl roused her, and drawing back a curtain, the light from her window fell upon Lion standing erect, every hair stiffening into attention. A moment more, and she heard the soft rush and thud of his feet on the wooden floor of the balcony, then down the steps, and it seemed but an instant after that she heard a hoarse cry, a smothered yell and a woman's scream, and the sound of a frantic struggle.

In an instant more Barbara was on her balcony.

Bending over in the direction of the sound, she saw a light streaming from the small door of the back entrance to Miss Griffith's rooms, and on the threshold within the light rolled a black, struggling mass.

A moment more, and Barbara was down the steps and across the courtyard.

A faint light still shone through the window of Michael's room. She knocked against the panes, crying "Michael Michael! come quick," and flew on towards the struggle.

As she drew near she heard the panting of the great dog, whose throat was held by strong, murderous fingers, but who, struggling with his immense strength, had his opponent down and was holding him in spite of all resistance. Broken curses in broadest dialect told Barbara that it must be some thief from the neighborhood, and just as she reached them the man, evidently anxious to escape, made one desperate effort, rose on his knees, and flung the dog from him. He sprang to his feet, but Lion was quicker, and a yell of anguish cut the cold, foggy air as Lion's teeth met in his opponent's leg.

"Lion! Lion!" cried Barbara. "Down, sir! Lion!"

Rushing forwards she flung her arms round the great dog's neck, falling on her knees beside him, for well she knew that Lion could kill his man if once roused.

Her voice and touch had an instantaneous effect upon the nobler brute, the dog; but the man, in gratitude for his release, planted a fearful blow on Lion's head at the risk of murdering Barbara, and in that instant revealed the face of Dicky Trudgeon.

The light from the entry grew always brighter, and a crackling sound was heard within as Michael rushed toward them, just in time to save Barbara from falling beneath Lion's body.

The great dog, stopped at the last instant in his career after his enemy, tore and strained at Michael's hand on his collar as Dicky Trudgeon fled for his life to a doorway out of the court, and vanished, flinging the door to behind him.

"Barbara! in God's name, what's this?"

"I don't know; Lion found Dicky Trudgeon and went for him. But quick, that must be fire!"

Leaving the dog they rushed into the entry, where a dreadful sight met their eyes. On the floor lay Miss Griffith insensible, and beside her a broken lamp which seemed to have exploded, saturating the mat beneath it with petroleum, which flamed up the sides of a great oaken press and crept in a fiery stream through to the inner room, where the thick hangings had caught and were blazing fiercely.

Michael dragged the body of his aunt back from the flaming mass, shouting:

"Back, Barbara! Out at the door! Help Aunt Eliza! Call the servants!"

They put Miss Griffith on a stone bench outside, and Michael rushed in again to tear down the hangings and try to smother the flames, while Barbara, at the servants' quarters, pealed bells and knocked and cried with all her force for help against fire.

In a few moments the place was all alive; the servants in gaping wonder at their mistress in her long blue dressing-gown, the heavy plaits of gleaming hair hanging below her knees—where the mud of the courtyard lay wet upon ribbon and lace—and on a bench what looked like the dead body of Miss Griffith.

"Quick, water from the spring! Fire in Miss Griffith's room! Your master's there, Mat! Stable buckets, Shapcott! fill them full, and pass them on," and Barbara's quick, clear voice kept them all going; while Deane and Priscilla (the latter having appeared from no one knew where) revived Miss Griffith enough to half drag, half carry her to a bedroom near.

Then Barbara rushed back to where Michael was fighting the flames, with two or three of the men servants. The

outer room was the worst, and between fire and water little was left but blackened dripping walls and floors and heaps of sodden cinders of drapery, which men were dragging out into the court. In the inner room Michael and a stableman stood blackened and breathless among the ruins of furniture and hangings, but the fire was completely out.

The rooms had always been overfilled, and now were a scene of indescribable ruin and confusion.

"How is Aunt Eliza, Barbara? I think this is out now, Shapcott. But we'll drag this lot outside. Safer, I think!"

"She's better," said Barbara. "Not burned or injured in any way that we can make out, but very queer—confused. She cannot speak distinctly. She has had an awful shock, and I think we ought almost to send for Dr. Reade, but the servants seem to me to be just amused over her. I am quite puzzled. Deane reassures me that she will be all right to-morrow, and Priscilla just sneers and smiles."

Michael detected a sly look on Shapcott's face and looked at the man sharply. He became as sober as a judge immediately.

"Look here, Shapcott! Speak out," said the Squire. "What do you know about this?"

"Thish yer accident, sir? I dawn't knew nothin' more'n you and Miss knaws. I was waked up long weth bells a-ringin' and dogs a-barkin', and that's the fust as I knew'd."

"I mean about Miss Griffith."

The man was evidently confused.

"Oh, I dawn't knew nothin', Squire. Her bain't damaged much likely, and—times her be likely fur tu be a bit muzzy-like."

"Muzzy! What do you mean?"

"Bless yer heart, Squire. Ax par'n I mane. Her wunt be rale fuddled, on'y a bit muzzy-like."

The blood shot into Michael's smeared and blackened face. He gave a startled look at Barbara, whose horrified eyes met his in equal consternation. He only said:

"Pull out these things, man. Are you in the habit of making that kind of joke among your stable friends? It does not suit me."

"I axes par'n, Squire. I 'adn't got no wish fur tu make tu free, but Missus was that theer skeared, and us knows 'tain't nothin' noo, nor nothin' fur tu cal' Doctor fur—Miss Griffith, her caen't abide Doctor."

"Very well," said Michael curtly, cutting short the man's excuses. "Just go round the entrances on this side of the house, Shapcott, and find out where that fellow Trudgeon got in—and out," and when the man was gone he asked:

"Are you afraid to stay here alone, Barbara? I'll go round and see what this means about Aunt Eliza."

"I'll stay willingly," said Barbara. "I can pick up some of these rags and ruins."

Michael was gone perhaps quarter of an hour, and when he returned one glance at his face was enough. He had washed off the black and got into a coat, but he looked like a man who has had a blow from which he was still giddy and confused.

He sat down for a moment without speaking. Barbara glanced at him and said nothing. She was busied in gathering up all sorts of articles which had rolled or fallen from their place during the tearing down of curtains and hangings.

"I believe it *is* so, Barbara," said Michael presently. "It is a wretched business, but I've sent for Reade. But what I want to know is, in Heaven's name how did she get the stuff? You have the keys?"

"Yes," said Barbara in a low, distressed tone; "but, Michael, I ought to have spoken to you, but I scarcely knew how."

"Do you mean that you actually suspected this? Good God! My mother's own sister! And the very servants look contemptuously at the miserable old figure there on the bed."

He covered his face with his hands.

A soft touch fell on his shoulder.

"No, no, Michael, I did not know. I never suspected. I never thought of such a thing as *this*. What I mean is, that something seemed wrong from the beginning that she should always be receiving such immense boxes from Linguelli and Wills, filled with every kind of delicacy and great quantities of liqueurs, and strong wines and so on. That is why with us at table her appetite was so small and so capricious. I had to pay for these boxes out of the house money," and she proceeded to tell him how his aunt had fared while his table had been so scantily furnished, before his marriage.

Gradually the whole story of the unclean spirit which had dwelt in these rooms unfolded itself. In the cupboards and presses of the anteroom was ample evidence.

But that was not all.

In their search for bottles and preserves they came upon very different things. Here were the ancient silver salts and goblets, massive plate of all sorts which Deane was forever lamenting. Here were tin boxes of deeds and papers, Miss Griffith's own comfortable bank-book, and finally a box upon which Michael pounced, and from which he produced the missing Trehanna emeralds, amidst other articles of handsome jewelry.

He looked at them, then round the room, which, as Barbara had once said, was so full of beautiful and val-

able things that one could scarcely move in it, and then sat down bewildered.

"And I asked you if you thought my mother's sister a pickpocket, Barbara," he said presently. "If it were not such a miserable disgrace every way round, it would almost be ludicrous. The descendant of the Welsh kings and the dairymaid! And I, comfortably deluded fool, thought that I was conferring such a favor on the girl whom my people had despised by reinstating her in *this honorable* family. By George! I wish the whole place had been burned, to clear out the moral pestilence. You were right to stand off and do your best to get free from us. I won't say one word more to keep you. Who knows, by some trick of the law you might even get your divorce."

He started up and began pacing the room with agitated strides. The disgrace touched him very keenly.

Barbara stood with wistful eyes watching him. What comfort could she give?

"And from my superior height I rebuked your efforts at righteous dealing," he went on presently, "and accused you of ill-temper—that your character had changed. If it had changed into *this!* You said I was always afraid you would disgrace *me*, Barbara. The tables are turned now."

"But, Michael," she cried out at last, "why should you take all this to yourself—as if it were your fault? It was never yours. You never knew."

"No, fatuous fool that I was," said he. "It has been dawning on me lately that I've made an awful mess of my life. I've been an unlucky devil. I'd little love for my father when my mother died, and I was but a boy then. I hated their ways somehow, though I loved the dear old place. Then, for luck I met Laura Carrol, and believed every lie she told me—sucking down the transparent

hypocrisy that everybody else saw through like mother's milk. And then I found out what a *thing* I had put up on high places to worship. A thousand times worse for me than if she had died, for I had no place left in my whole anatomy for belief in a woman. I thought—well, better not say what I thought about women. It was not pretty. But I meant to be protective to my family, and so I married."

"Will it appease your pride, Barbara, to know what stages of surprise and wrath and humiliation I passed through? What torments of divided passion till I gave in to you? And I gave in, with my usual luck, when just my very struggles and ill-temper had lost the battle for me. My God! what is the good of it all?" as with a reckless, desperate gesture he stopped in his excited walk in front of Barbara.

"Everything seems against me," he went on. "I could not make myself hateful enough to you in my own proper person, and so there is this—this disgrace. It puts the last blot on our charming family page. This is the first room that I brought *my wife* into—here she got her first insult, here she shall have revenge. Here she can put her foot on the neck of the man who caused her humiliation. Am I abject enough? God knows I have struggled against your power till my whole mind and reason are given over to a passion so intense and overwhelming that I *must* give it voice at last, even though I know that I am a blind, besotted fool to do it. Not blind to love—no. I see at last a glimpse of a lost paradise where years ago I only dimly imagined a feeble heaven with a spangled idol within, instead of a woman all glorious and pure, mind, body, and spirit. Let me say it out, and then you fling your last taunt at me, and go. I love you, wife who are no wife—I love you with a love as hot as fire and as true

as steel, as I had no conception that a man *could* love, and you may hate me, leave me, despise me—the mock husband, if you will—but so will I love you to my life's end."

He had poured out this declaration—first in broken, excited sentences, and then in a sudden stream of intense feelings—and he stopped, seeing that Barbara's face had drooped lower and lower till it rested on her hands.

He was still one moment.

"You have nothing to say, Barbara? How should you? From being condescending I have become obtrusive, that's all. Never mind," and again his voice had taken the mocking, bitter ring which was so indescribably painful.

Barbara lifted her face. She put one hand upon the table to steady herself, but it shook, as indeed every member of her body trembled before a passion which she knew now was that of a man in deadly earnest.

There must have been something in her face which spoke to him, while her tongue vainly sought for power to frame a word, for he said:

"You are sorry for me, Barbara, not disgusted. You might even forgive me before we part."

He was leaning over and bent one knee to get nearer.

"Yes," she said hurriedly. "Oh, I forgive; but there was nothing—I mean I was wrong too—and—but this—no, it mustn't be, Michael."

This meant that he had taken the hand stretched out to put him away and was pressing it feverishly, passionately to his lips.

"You forget, Michael!" cried Barbara. "I told you—"

"Oh, my love!" he pleaded. "I'll remember—I'll do anything, only—one kiss, darling—just one!"

And before she knew it he had her in his arms and his lips had found hers in a lingering, passionate pressure.

Only an instant, and she struggled to free herself.

"Oh, Michael, no," she cried, as she stood, covered with blushes, and trembling beside him. "It will be more misery. You yourself know of the cloud over me, the strange self that makes part of me—the—the presence—the memory that *will* come back. *That* you cannot love. You have seen the suffering—you have seen me, only a girl, yet grow double with sorrow and age not mine. I warn you, Michael! I am only half Barbara now."

"Oh, my darling, is that all? Do you think *I* fear? If you are woman, angel, devil—all, I love you. Are you only half Barbara? Oh, if there could be love in that bit of you, you would soon be all my love. Oh, my beauty, don't turn from me. In time you will learn how to love. Combat those dead memories with a living force. Here in my arms"—and he gathered her close again—"Bevill Tre-hanna can't touch you, body or soul. Don't you see?" he went on, pleading as if for life. "It is a question of force in your own soul. The new power would overcome the old if you were mine."

He stopped; a shiver shook him from head to heel. His eyes had met those of Barbara—beautiful passionate eyes, full of a life he had never seen in them before; and in a rapture of surprise the words died on his lips.

Plain as words, nay, clearer than any speech was the dumb language of love.

Silently their eyes hung on each other one moment, and then, almost solemnly, he put his lips to hers.

"Kiss me," he whispered, and the timid tender touch in response told him, without words, of a gift he had not dared to hope.

It was some minutes before they came back to every-day life, and realized that they were standing in a dismantled room with blackened walls at two o'clock in the morning.

"Oh dear!" said Barbara suddenly. "Deane is watching by Miss Griffith, and probably wondering what on earth has become of me."

"Deane will have plenty to wonder over for the next few days," said Michael. "Don't be in such a hurry. We've lots of consultation to do, wife o' mine. That's the best of it, you know," he broke off again, falling back into the dominant idea, "you're really my wife, my own wife, Barbie."

"Not at all," said Barbara mischievously. "You never noticed on your wedding day that I repeated the promises very badly, very low, and I—I left out love and obey altogether. I never considered that I was really married," she added audaciously, her eyes falling, however, the next minute before Michael's.

"Oh, you didn't, madam!" said he. "Then we'll just go up to Carvarron Church to-morrow morning all by ourselves, and I'll take care that you give me every promise, clear and true. And then we'll have a wedding tour to find a home somewhere for Aunt Eliza, and proceed to keep our honeymoon for the rest of our days."

"That's all upside down," said Barbara. "Courtship always comes before matrimony. I was defrauded of my full period of worship—the time when the girl has supremacy before being ground under heel in wedlock. Besides, I think, before we go through any more ceremonies, we should arrange about our incompatibility of temper."

"As if anything could make you sweet-tempered!" laughed Michael. "There's one thing I feel quite reassured about. *Barbara* is all there. There's evidently no diminution of wickedness just yet. I was getting afraid that you were ready for translation to a better sphere, but you're not yet. If you imagine that you are going to keep me on probation for a month or two—"

"But I am going travelling," interrupted Barbara, with a most ingenuous countenance.

"So am I," said Michael. "I was defrauded in the very beginning of my wedding tour."

"Arthur Trehanna is coming to Carvarron to-morrow," said Barbara, her eyes dancing with mischief.

"I shall do that young man some damage yet," said Michael, "if you don't keep him out of your walks and conversation."

A sound of feet was heard, and the two started guiltily apart.

They had forgotten all about Shapcott and Dicky Trudgeon.

Shapcott had had a long and fruitless search. He had found a garden door unlocked and a key in it; but, as he said:

"There be fifty ways whereby Dicky could a got near the house, but hur could'n' a got nigh tu Miss Griffith 'athout some person a-kawin' of ut. An' anxin' one an' another there be some as du say Priscilla goed raoun' Dicky's placee times an' again, so as her'd be 'quaint long weth he. Like as not 'twar she."

Michael dismissed the man as quietly as might be, promising strict inquiry next day.

Barbara had taken the opportunity to vanish, and the next thing evidently was to send the household to bed, leaving Priscilla to watch by Miss Griffith.

Bnt he found more difficulty than he had expected. Things had so altered their aspect to him within the last hour that everything seemed easy, easier than it really was.

Miss Griffith had begun to talk so strangely and incoherently that the servants, frightened, had turned to Barbara for directions, and they were all kept anxious and unquiet until the arrival of Dr. Reade.

That cautious gentleman spoke of shock to the nervous system, fever, derangement of the liver; and then intimated that he would consult with Squire Trehanna as to necessary steps.

"Well, Squire," said he, when the door of Michael's den was closed, "I think the best thing to do at once is to wire to Plymouth for a nurse."

"Is it so bad?" asked Michael in dismay.

"H'm! We shall see. It may yield to treatment, but she must have some authority over her, who knows what to be at, and Miss Griffith would probably frighten Mrs. Trehanna."

"I don't think my wife is so easily cowed."

"Ah, but people who see snakes get strong and desperate sometimes."

"See snakes! Good Heavens, you don't mean that!"

"D.T." said the doctor, with a dry nod and compressed lips.

Michael sat down, powerless to express the loathing which turned him sick.

"A woman—and my mother's sister. How in all the earth—?"

"Now look here, my dear sir," said Dr. Reade, seating himself and tapping Michael confidentially on the knee, "we don't talk about this kind of thing, you know. Nervous shock, following on a good many years of unhealthy living, plays the dickens with old ladies. A lonely life, don't you see. Your brother Humphrey took morphia for asthma, and she got used to seeing its effects, and quieting her own nerves with a drop of fine old cordial. Went out too little. Took every kind of highly-spiced, poisonous rubbish and fluids to keep all square. A good nightcap every evening, I suspect, and so on. I gave her a word or two when Mr. Humphrey Trehanna died, and

she took it ill, you know. I heard a whisper now and then which pointed to an increase of the habit lately. But what is a doctor to do who is not consulted? Clearly he must hold his tongue. You would have shown me the door you know, if I had hinted to you to look after her."

He leaned back in his chair, nursing his own knee. Michael looked at him speechless.

"Well, now," continued the doctor, leaning forward again in his confidential attitude, "get rid of that maid of hers; not to be trusted. Put Mrs. Deane in the room till the nurse comes. I'll send you up something for her; and if I were you I would not let Mrs. Trehanna into the room. Yes, I know she's brave, know it very well; but Miss Vaughan tells me that she has taken to bad headaches and fainting-fits lately. These young wives, you know; you'll have to take care of her. Hid it from you, did she?" as the look of consternation which accompanied a sickening pang at Michael's heart made it evident to the doctor that he knew nothing of it.

"She's not of the complaining kind; but we'll look after her, never fear! Splendid physique to fall back on, but highly strung. That kind of thing. If I were you, I think I'd keep within call of Miss Griffith's room myself, Squire," continued the doctor, "just till the nurse comes. She may need a strong hand, and it is just as well to keep long tongues and ears out of a case like this."

So there were no visits, ceremonial or otherwise, to Carvarron Church that day, and Squire Michael passed most of his time in a small anteroom close to that of Miss Griffith, in spite of Barbara's almost tearful entreaties to be allowed to take her share of the watch.

He was only needed once, it is true; for the sight of her austere-looking nephew cowed the miserable old woman at once, on the only occasion when she got beyond Deane's

authority, and she relapsed into a melancholy whimper meant for pious resignation.

Priscilla was interviewed, and her knowledge of Dicky Trudgeon's visit became apparent.

She had let him in.

Where she had gone during his visit was less apparent but as soon as she found that she was to be dismissed, and that Miss Griffith's health would probably require travel as soon as she was out of bed, she altered her tone.

The girl had evidently been buoyed up by the certainty that Squire Trehanna was going away again, and that Miss Griffith in his absence would soon find a way of getting rid of the new missus, "as was a dairymaid," and that power would return as of old to the unfortunate woman now lying in delirium in the blue room. Undeceived on this point, the girl changed her tactics, and, whining and whimpering of her affection for the poor young lady, Mrs. Trehanna, and of her being often ashamed of "them messages as Miss Griffith sent," accused herself and others in turn till Michael, confused and ashamed at the ceaseless proofs of what Barbara had had to suffer, peremptorily put an end to the recital, paid the girl's wages, and got rid of her.

He saw enough, however, to understand that Dicky Trudgeon and Miss Griffith were in secret treaty of some sort, and that as time had gone on Dicky had grown more and more insolent and insistent. He could form a pretty good guess as to the reason.

The Trudgeons had been turned out, neck and crop by the Squire, for lining their own pockets; but the really responsible factor in the case, who had impounded far more than the Trudgeons, had been left in possession of all her ill-gotten goods. She was probably to be made to disgorge, and Dicky found it a tough job.

This finding of the copper, and putting off *sine die* foreign

travel for the Squire, had put a stroke through Dicky's reckoning, if he had hoped to win by seeing Miss Griffith reinstated in power.

Hence his visit to find out how matters really stood. He probably went away grumbling and insolent, and both he and Miss Griffith forgot precautions, and forgot Lion, who, seeing a suspicious figure, had interfered, with the result that Dicky had to fight for his life; and Miss Griffith in blind terror, shaky with her usual "nightcap," had fled and fallen, breaking the lamp, and probably striking her head enough to stun herself.

Being pretty much a prisoner for the day, Michael kept in his own possession the keys which gave access to Miss Griffith's dismantled rooms. It would be well to avoid remarks, when bit by bit articles long lost in Trehanna should reappear in their proper places in the household.

CHAPTER XXII

WHEN Barbara understood that she was to be rigidly excluded from the sick-room, and that Dr. Reade had aroused all Michael's solicitude on her behalf, she would have laughed at his fears, and persuaded and reassured him; but as her husband, with his arm about her waist, proceeded to impress his opinions upon her lips, Deane opened the door from the inner room, which caused Mrs. Trehanna to flee, blushing scarlet, and the Squire to walk up and down the scene of his captivity, whistling below his breath, with his hands in his pockets.

It was a sharp October morning—the fresh autumn air crisping the yellow leaves on the trees, and causing the Virginia creeper on the wall to fall in showers of gold and crimson, as Barbara put foot upon the terrace.

This would have been a lovely wedding morning. All light and color without, no gray leaden clouds hiding the sun, as on the day which had seen her contract with Trehanna.

If she could have gone with Michael to-day up among those golden woods to the little church—they two—all alone, as he had said, she would have taken the vow this time with all her heart and soul to be all that Michael had whispered to her last night, and she blushed again at the remembrance of his words and looks, and then smiled at the change in his way of thinking.

"Red-headed Gill" possessed a glorious crown of gold now—the "dairymaid's" cheeks were of the texture and

hue of a white rose with a pink flush at the heart, as silken to the touch, as fragrant as the flower—her lips!

Well, she had always thought that novelists made a great mistake in making the heroes and heroines alter so completely, and grow so utterly foolish and poetical as soon as they fell in love—but there seemed to be some reason for it after all. What utter nonsense they had both talked! And they had meant every word of it.

She would like to give him a bride this time worth looking at.

The hard, cold ceremony—the every-day look and feel of everything had made the wedding day a remembrance to shudder at.

Another wedding was impossible.

She already, in the eye of the law, belonged to the man who had always had for her a sort of separate place, an attraction which she had raged against, making his careless wooing, and his still more careless wearing, of his bride a constant outrage to her pride, and to some other feeling which she had never tried to name.

Now—she smiled again—he had not an idea how he had stood to her all along. He thought she loved him only now—at last. He wanted a real bride now.

A bright thought shot through her brain. They would yet carry out the wedding project of which he had spoken, and she would take with her a wedding garment to make his bride more worthy.

The beautiful Indian silk which should have been her bridal dress lay in its wrappings in her room. What she had cut from it could scarcely have been noticed in its volume. It should do service yet.

She was very quick and clever with her needle, and to fashion the fabric into what would suit it best—a long loose robe laid in shining folds from neck to foot, and simply

girded round her waist—would give little work, and so delicate and clinging was the texture that it would go into the smallest compass for transportation to the church, and would lie fair and smooth over a white morning-gown.

Almost breathless with eagerness, Barbara flew up to her room, and plunged into a big wardrobe for the silk. There it was, silvery changing, gleaming in the light—yards of it.

Half an hour later Barbara and a nimble-fingered maid had it shaped and drove their needles into it as though they were East-end shirt-makers working for a crust.

That was at ten o'clock in the morning, and Anne, the maid, thought she had never seen her mistress looking so fresh and bright, even in the days when she was "Miss Barbie to Penlooe."

The work was pleasant enough. Once cut and shaped—and that Mrs. Trehanna did herself: for the stuff made one "dazzly-like," so Anne said—the needles glided through like magic.

"Beautiful silk 'tes tu," said Anne, "just like the sea when the sun be shinin'."

"And it comes from over the sea, too," answered the mistress, "from a country where black people live, who make the most beautiful things you ever saw."

"Who would a thought they niggers was so clever now!" said Anne.

"Not niggers; they have straight black hair, as smooth as yours, and very fine-cut delicate features."

"Lor', ma'am! Be they rayther undersized now? and more sort o' black like tu boots when the blackin's wore off, an' a kind o' slidey slithery sort of a way weth their hands, an' all awver? Thin like—sort o' genteel make?"

Barbara looked up astonished. Where had Anne seen a Hindu?

"Twur Wednesday when a chap come about the back entrance a-wantin' fur tu sell a lot o' gimcracks, queer kind o' bracelet things and boxes, and he give 'em cruel chape, he ded."

"And he was black?"

"Jest like you was a-tellin' of, ma'am. Flatterin' ways he'd a got—tu."

"Oh, did he say such pretty things to get a purchaser?"

"Twarn't so much that as 'bout yew ma'am, makin' so bould. He said he'd a hearn tell as the mistress o' thes yer place to Trehanna wur a borned beauty, he ded—an' 'ad gould an' silver gownds like to the sun and mune for brightness."

"What a silly man!" said Barbara lightly, and thought no more of it.

The sewing progressed. The garment was tried on to the slim figure of the owner, and by and by the girl's chatter wearying Barbara, she sent her away to other work and plied the needle alone.

How the silk changed and dazzled as she bent over it—silver, opal, spun sunshine! And the room was so bright with the reflection of the sun on the sea coming in from that open room on the front side.

On such a morning as this, with the light flooding in just as now, somebody—who was it?—had stood by the window waiting eagerly for the big black-eyed man who took a great roll from a sailor here at the door, crying, "There, sweetheart! Ne'er a dame to Cornwall has such a store of bravery as I bring thee now."

The needle went slower—stopped—her hand dropped among the folds of silk.

Barbara's eyes looked dreamy, abstracted; the smile left her face, and pain seemed to pucker her forehead into an uneasy frown. Presently she seemed listening; then she

started up, walking up and down the room with her eyes bent on the floor, her lips moving, her face changing subtly, till it seemed as though her mouth had fine lines, drawing it into a sour disdainful smile; her eyes narrowing with a look of mistrust, her cheek taking a gray lifeless hue, adding years to her age—an awful change which might well cause her to peer in the glass and murmur with ashy lips, and cast hurried anxious glances to the door, as if listening.

Presently she stood, hushed as if every fiber were strung with intense expectation, for a moment, then hurrying in headlong haste she was out at the door, into the adjoining room whose window looked out upon the park, the terrace, and the sea.

Here she sunk upon her knees, with her face pressed to the window-pane, as though watching for a figure which *must* appear if she did but wait. By and by her head drooped on her hands and soon she trailed one foot wearily after the other, back again to the room which she had left.

Here, sunk back in a chair, deathly pale, the shining silken gown hanging half fallen from the chair upon the floor, the maid found her when she came to announce the simultaneous arrival of the doctor and the luncheon.

The girl seemed appalled at the change in her mistress since the morning.

She hurriedly brought water, salts, and essences to revive her. In a short time Barbara Trehanna looked like a pale, drooping edition of the bright girl she had been at breakfast-time, but still infinitely more like her than the white scared creature whom Anne had discovered in the big cushioned chair.

She seemed confused, struggling between the tangible reality of daily life and the objects around her—the very hairbrush in her hand, the cotton gown of the maid—

and some existence just as real which had receded into the depths of her mind.

Her own words to Michael the night before, that she was only half Barbara, now seemed true.

She found Dr. Reade and Squire Trehanna in deep conference.

The nurse could not arrive till night, but Michael had half an hour's liberty for lunch, for the patient lay for the time in a kind of stupor which the doctor said might last awhile.

Both men looked hard at Barbara, Michael in speechless trouble and anxiety at her appearance, Dr. Reade with acute professional interest.

"How do *you* do, Mrs. Trehanna?" said he, emphasizing his words. "Is this a headache day?"

"Something like it, I think," she said faintly. "Will you come in and have lunch, Dr. Reade?"

"You will have to take my wife in hand, doctor," said the Squire; "I expect this upset last night has been bad for her."

"Very likely," quoth the doctor calmly, as he seated himself at table. "It's apt to be trying to the nerves to find one's house on fire in the middle of the night."

To himself he thought, "I never saw such a change in living woman in three months, without a very bad illness. She looks forty."

Being gifted with a fair amount of tact he managed to turn the conversation upon indifferent subjects, then to Trehanna's own experience in the Soudan and elsewhere, and gradually got Barbara into the conversation and reduced her age—in his own mind—by ten years in half an hour; though the difference even then between her and the Barbie Trehanna of Penlooe, whom he had known so well as a girl, made a singular impression upon his mind.

It seemed almost like a change of identity, if the bare thought had not been mad. Farmer Cardew's Barbie, with the brilliant, flashing hazel eyes, the clear blush-rose tinted cheek, skin pure as a baby's, and the saucy, mischievous smile. Was this the white, weary woman with pain-puckered brows, and pallid, tightly-compressed lips, whose eyes seemed too tired and dulled with weeping to care to look upon the world?

How on earth had Trehanna used her to bring her to this?

He seemed anxious enough about her, too, but the love, if it were love, was all on his side, for she barely glanced at him.

After lunch Barbara had to submit to some professional inquiries from the doctor, who however, beyond discovering a want of tone and prescribing change and fresh air, could suggest little to be done.

"You should ride more, Mrs. Trehanna," said he. "Now, I am riding right through your grounds to Treeby village; won't you give me the pleasure of your company part of the way? I won't ask you to come right on to Treeby, for they have fever badly there, and the place is in a very unhealthy state."

"I don't envy you your ride, doctor," said the Squire. "Treeby is the most disgusting, ill-conditioned place on the coast. Of course my wife could not enter it, nor go within a mile of it. And she'd be insulted, you know, if she were to meet a Treeby man. They've rougher tongues than any of the people about here."

"But they keep out of Trehanna proper, you know, Squire," said Dr. Reade. "They are a bad lot, I dare say, but they are handicapped too, badly handicapped."

"I don't see how," said the Squire. "Treeby situation would make its fortune if it weren't for the people. There

it lies in a sheltered cove, in the sun, on the coast, in as lovely a place as any along the Riviera, but you can't go within a mile of it without holding your nose. They are as filthy as they can be, and live, and besides that they are determined smugglers and poachers. There are always fights going on and complaints coming in. Half of them live on Trehanna property, but I am ashamed to say that their pigsties belong to me. Rent they won't pay, repairs they won't do, and it is as much as a Trehanna workman dare to go there and mend a roof."

"Yes," said the doctor. "Most unfortunate state of things, most unfortunate! And just now they are hard to deal with. Typhoid fever very bad. Some of the best men down with it. Drainage nil. They'd a big haul of fish, and half of it left to cure, and for want of hands they've left it to rot. Fresh water not to be had. Fever patients parched for the lack of it—and the bog, just above high tide, in the very midst of the place, steaming white with a regular malaria every night."

"Horrible state of things," assented Trehanna, tugging at his mustache while he watched the wan face that Barbara turned to the doctor. Not one look of love or even of interest had he got from her since her entrance. What was wrong?

"It's water that's wanted," continued the doctor. "There are two wells in the whole place, but I'm pretty sure they are just surface-water. You know their grievance against Trehanna has always been about water."

"Water!" cried Michael. "Why, they've got all there is. There's the sea before their very doors. I wonder how they escape washing at all."

"But they can't drink that," said the doctor, "nor cook with it."

"I'll go and put on my hat, doctor," said Barbara

hastily, and left the room without consulting her husband's liking—or rather evident dislike of the expedition.

"The nurse very likely may be in by the seven train at Twalmouth," said the doctor, as he and Mrs. Trehanna mounted their horses. "I'll bring her along and settle her in, Squire."

And Michael Trehanna returned to his dreary sentinel's post, pulling savagely at a big cheroot while he frowned at a volume of Balzac which he did not see, and racked his brains to account for the change in Barbara.

In that very room that morning, the April face as fresh as an apple blossom, red and white changing at every breath, had almost been pressed by his lips when that stupid woman Deane had frightened her away. Surely Deane could not have changed her like that. She had been entreating to share his watch.

Those soft shadowy eyes darkened in earnest appeal as they hung on his.

"Please, Michael *dear*, go and rest and let me stay." Dear! She had never uttered one single word of endearment to him before. Dear! It had run through his veins with a tingle in a moment.

And now at lunch the stone pillar there on the terrace had shown as much living warmth as she.

He doubted whether she had remembered Aunt Eliza or himself. She sat like one in a dream, and when spoken to had answered in a voice almost unlike her own.

What was it she had said yesterday about the strange self which made part of her—these memories which weighed on her? What were they?

It seemed that there was something to be faced, something to explain after all, which could not be put away as being unworthy of the attention of common sense.

She had appealed to him, warned him, insisted on some

strange cloud which weighed on her. Would it do any good to speak to Reade?

No! a thrill of repulsion at the very thought ran through him. Have a surgeon, with an eye like a lancet, to pry into the mystery of mind which the gentlest and most loving touch might wound in vain?

Surely her own fears so falteringly expressed of her own sanity could have no foundation. What a horrible thought!

Barbara—practical, clear-eyed Barbara—mad? Pshaw! if she were mad, then they were all maniacs together, for had they not all seen and profited by the consequences of her "*memories*"? If it had not been for her knowledge of the red book, they would never have found Carvarron copper. But whence came her knowledge of the red book, or of those candlesticks, or of the road to the lost pit?

Who communicated the knowledge to her? People talked all sorts of bosh about Trehanna ghosts. Absurd. They had never appeared to him, nor to any one else with a good digestion and a little common sense. Clairvoyance? Trickery? Barbara was no hysterical fool, posing as possessor of abnormal powers. The knowledge was real. The suffering it produced was real.

In spite of what Michael had said to Barbara about his capacity for assimilating ideas, he had no corner in his mental premises for the supernatural.

On the contrary, he was convinced that natural law extended a good deal farther than wise men had ever traced it, and that what we call phenomena will be commonplace some years hence when we know the reason why. Aye, the reason.

If he could find out the reason of these strange changes in Barbara he might lose the element of pain which was battling with his love for her. She was not a capricious,

empty-headed girl, trying to play on his love for her. His Barbara had always been full of individuality. A living self, full of character, fire and dew, wit and practicality—that was the Barbara whose love had spoken from her eyes, from her whole face last night. The woman who had gone riding with Dr. Reade was another.

It was growing dusk before Barbara returned, but she did not enter directly. Michael, from his post at the window of the antechamber at the corner wing, could hear her light step pacing up and down, up and down the terrace as though she would never tire.

Miss Griffith was very restless, and Michael did not leave his post to dine, but had his dinner brought him. Then at last release came in the shape of doctor and nurse.

It was decided to remove the patient to a quieter, more remote part of the house, where she could be nursed and controlled more easily in what promised to be rather a tedious than a dangerous illness, thus removing restraint from the rest of the household, which for many reasons it was desirable to leave free to return to normal ways.

It was not wise to magnify the fire nor its causes or effects in the eyes of the neighborhood. Miss Griffith's health had always been delicate and might be rather more so for some time in consequence of the shock, but there was no danger, and, though she received no visitors, there was no reason to shut the door on friends visiting other members of the family. These things settled, at last Michael took his way to the hall, where a great fire of logs was burning, and where, in a corner of the oaken settle within the light, a figure sat with clasped hands staring into the embers. His heart beat at the sight of the gleaming golden head.

It was Barbara.

Was it?

The face raised as he came near was drawn and haggard, so unlike Barbara's face that he stopped with a curious feeling of uncertainty. His eyes wandered searchingly over her features as she gave a kind of laugh.

"You are in doubt as to who I ain," she said. "So am I."

"Barbara," he said in a short agitated whisper.

She joined her two shaking hands together.

"No!" she answered. "Let me be honest. I have tried to be till now. This," and she touched one hand with the other, "is Barbara; this," and she touched her cheek and laid her hand upon her breast—"all this that is flesh and blood is Barbara, but into the head and heart has come a power, a self, which is not natural to Barbara, and with which she has nothing to do. This self has suffered, and made others suffer; has done wrong, and keeps the thoughts of Barbara in incessant turmoil, always the same groove, over and over again hearing the curses of generations, and longing to right the wrong that was done. Will you help? Will you let right be done now, Michael Trehanna?"

They stood staring at one another.

Michael's face was blanched as white as hers. So the balance of reason had turned, he thought, and there was an awful tightening at his throat as his dry lips refused to move.

By the settle drawn back a little was the huge mastiff, Lion; but his hair seemed to bristle all down the long back-bone, and he had thrust his head forward watching his mistress with a strange frightened stare.

"I must tell you, I must tell you," broke from the girl's lips again almost in a moan. "Trehanna wronged Treeby, and Trehanna must right it again. To-day men and women are dying in fever, fathers and mothers wild with

despair over the corpses of little children with blackened lips and dried skeleton faces, who have lain in torment and died for want of a mouthful of pure water, the water that should have been theirs where God himself sent it, but for the revenge of one wicked woman who turned Treeby river from its course from Carvarron and guided it to Trehanna lake, and flung it over Trehanna cliffs to waste in the sea rather than leave it in its course where it had always flowed, down the ravine to Treeby, where it turned the mill and fed the meadows and filled the marshy bed, which lies now in stagnant filth impesting the very air."

Michael had sunk into a chair in speechless misery, listening to this torrent of words which scarcely conveyed any sense to his mind.

"Oh, listen! Michael Trehanna," said the hard, excited voice which was *not* Barbara's. "Take in what I am saying! It is truth—hard, horrible truth. The doctor told you some to-day, but not one-half, oh! not one-half. How should he know? Treeby village has suffered three hundred years because Treeby miller angered Gillian Trehanna. To ruin the Treeby miller, who was a scoundrel pander between Bevill Trehanna and the false Spanish woman, Gillian turned the water from his mill. Treeby river rises in Carvarron, Gillian's own land.

"There is Carvarron above the ravine; she dammed it up from its course down to Treeby, and turned it into Trehanna grounds, and made the great lake there to receive it. And not one drop of that pure sparkling water ever flowed past the mill again, not an ounce of flour could the miller grind. He was ruined, and Treeby town was ruined too. The clean village that was is a filthy, foul-smelling den of ugly ruffians, who have suffered from every kind of plague that dirt can bring, and every pas-

sion that comes from a lifelong sense of bitter wrong done to them by those in high places.

"But none can thrust hand in God's providence and wrench it aside without bitter recompense, and Gillian's own son—the fair-haired, beautiful Philip, the one comfort left her when her husband was gone or dead, and her eldest son had left her for the service of the Queen—little Philip was drowned in that very lake of ill-gotten water, and brought home through this hall, dripping and dead, to his mother's sight. Here they laid him," and her voice sank to a whisper as she pointed to a table near the great door, "and the water made great pools upon the floor."

She flung herself back in the settle and covered her face with her hands, rocking herself to and fro like one in pain.

There was a curious method in this madness, if madness it were.

Some half-forgotten tale dawned on his mind again. Some such things he had heard in his boyhood.

Had Barbara taken the fever, and was it a delirium born of fever which harped upon this theme of water?

He scarcely knew how to deal with her. This was not *his* Barbara.

Again she turned to him a quivering face, full of tortured memory.

"Will you give back the water? The wrong that is done cries out for redress. Who can give back the dead? But there are widows of strong men, crying for water to give their fevered children; husbands who will dare any violence to carry a cool drink to a dying wife. They are ready to storm Trehanna for justice. Will you destroy that dam and give the river back? Will you take the curse from Trehanna?"

At last, for the first time he got speech.

"Where did you hear all this? Were you in Treeby village, Barbara?"

Her face altered uneasily at his voice and the sound of her name.

Half mechanically, as though still listening, she began to speak again.

"Not in the village, no; on Trehanna cliffs above. I saw all. I saw the dead carried up the hill to the church-yard. I saw a woman rush from her cottage door like a mad thing and fling her dead child before the feet of the doctor's horse. I saw men come up and lift the child and try and calm the woman. I saw them threaten the doctor. I saw them turn menacingly, shaking their fists towards Trehanna. Their very love for their own kin will make them like wild beasts in their desperation."

He watched her growing excitement again.

"If this is all so—if there is so much misery for the sake of an ornamental lake in Trehanna, it should have been destroyed years ago. I will find out. We will do what is right."

"Yes, right," she assented wearily. "For the right; not for liking, not for quiet, for right. If that had been so long ago! But revenge breeds revenge."

She sat with clasped hands, bending forward, gazing into the fire; the worn face, the whole attitude so expressive of dejection and weariness that Michael's heart ached for pity.

"I will go to-morrow and see about it; see how Treeby river is to be guided down, for it won't do to sweep away cottages and pigsties on the road," he said with forced lightness of tone. "Then you will get the business off your mind, though really, you know, you are the last person who needs to reproach herself about it. The person who was answerable for it has had to answer for all her mis-

deeds to her Maker three hundred years ago; and though the consequences are felt by her descendants, they would only be answerable if they continued a wrong knowing it to be such. I suppose I am Dame Gillian's grandson eight times removed, and I am her representative just now, so I'm the person responsible for the right administration of her ancient possessions. Isn't that so?"

Barbara looked at him silently for a moment and then repeated, "A grandson, eight generations passed."

"Yes, that is it," said Michael, trying to bring her mind back from its vicarious self-torturing to the commonplace facts of every-day life. "That is it. Don't you know your family tree? which setteth forth how Bevill and Gillian his wife had issue Humphrey, which begot Richard, which begot—who was the next chap? I forget. Anyhow, I know that it has been a perfectly straight line, never descending by a side branch, though more than once a younger son inherited. They have been a long-lived race as a rule. Dame Gillian died comparatively young—not much over forty, was she?"

"Died? I suppose so; I don't know."

It seemed strange that, knowing Dame Gillian's life so well, she did not know as much of her death.

"She was ill, very tired," continued Barbara dreamily, speaking to the fire. "Too tired to go on drawing breath, and the thought of death was very good."

"Well," said Michael quietly, fixing his eyes on Barbara, "she went to rest three centuries ago, and all her contemporaries, husband and children, friends and foes, went too, and now for to-day I should say, don't dwell on dead-and-gone troubles which time has mostly healed long ago. We've quite enough to do with the evil of our own day and generation without resurrecting ancient fictitious woes."

Barbara did not answer.

He came closer and laid his hand on hers, which was deadly cold.

"Do you not feel well, Barbara, my wife?"

She turned her eyes to him as though frightened. A faint color stole to her cheek.

"No," she said, shrinking back, "tired, very, very tired. My body is like a log, and my brain goes on crowding up my mind with thought. Oh, if I were only dead!" and she leant her head despairingly upon her hands.

He took one of these hands in his, gently but firmly, cold as it was; it was the round, supple hand of youth, Barbara's hand.

He remembered how she had warned him last night—could it be only last night?—that she was only half Barbara now, and how he had insisted that if but a particle of her love, of herself remained, he would bring it back to life.

The struggle had been nearer than he thought.

"You want rest? You would take *death* for the sake of rest? Ah! you're wrong: love is stronger than death, mightier than any grief. Strong to take half your trouble or all. It is just the want of love—that you have dropped it out of your life, that makes you so weary. Come back to me, my darling. Leave the dead past. Love never dies."

He put his arm round her, and bending down pressed his lips softly and long on the warm white strip of exquisite neck which lay between the coils of burnished hair and the fallen collar of her dress. It crimsoned beneath his touch, and a quick breath showed that she had felt that touch from head to foot, as she sprang up.

"My heart was growing numb, will you wake it to more torture, between love that was, that degrades—that died

—and love that is not mine, love given to the fair outside which is not me—and I—can I forget?"

"No, not forget—remember. A dream of the past—not yours—has tortured you. Look at me, Barbara. True love waits faithfully till this spirit of strangeness is cast out, and my Barbara confides in her husband's love."

He stood before her, looking straight into the eyes she had raised at last to his. The honest depths of dark tender blue held her silent for a moment, breathless.

"Can't you trust me, Barbara? What is it that has come between us to-day? What has happened since last night to take my wife so far off?"

"You shuddered at me just now. You scarcely knew me. You thought me mad."

"You looked very ill, my Barbie, but you are better."

She looked at him dumbly, but her face was changing back to youth.

"I don't understand it yet," he said, "but I love you all the same."

"I can never make you understand," she said piteously. "And it may be wrong. Oh! God knows, I may be mad," and the tears rolled helplessly down her cheeks.

Without another word he took her in his arms and pressed her weeping face to his breast; and as she grew calmer he whispered:

"Does love give no rest, my darling?"

The face she raised to him, though still sad and perplexed, was lighted by love's own coloring. She was his Barbara again.

He drew her to the old settle, and drawing her close, as though fearing she might escape him again, said:

"Now tell me what is this that you think I cannot understand?"

"It is a sudden attack of memory—there is no other

word—like an attack of remorse. You know how it is in the mornings, if you have slept soundly, forgetting some sorrow or trouble, you wake, wondering first why you are not happy; and then suddenly springs up a tiger of trouble hidden away somewhere in your brain all night, and the shock of remembrance makes your whole self tingle with pain, it is so close, so strong. Well, that is what comes to me—an agony of remembrance of another's life, for which I somehow am answerable. If it were just some memory, like that softened by years, griefs of childhood of long ago, it would not matter; but it is so overwhelming, so sudden, so lifelike in every detail, that for the moment it is fresher than all my knowledge of my own life in Penlooe and here, and I am just as unhappy turning over jealous, mistrustful thoughts of Bevill Trehanna, as if we had seen each other yesterday. Why, I remember the pain of the brutal clutch upon my arm with which he answered my accusations, so that to-day I was looking upon the flesh for the mark of his fingers."

"It came upon you to-day, when?"

"After I left you this morning, I went to my rooms and called Anne to help me with some sewing. She stayed awhile, and the chatter became wearisome, or my head ached, and I sent her away and continued sewing myself; and then—"

"Well?"

"Then, after she went, the sun dazzled my eyes and made me giddy for a moment, and I *remembered* suddenly, standing by my door, Dame Gillian's door in just such sunshine, and a man, Sir Bevill, came in with a great pile of silks, which he had brought home in his ship, and he was laughing and joking about my bravery of apparel. Then in a little while he went out, and I mistrusted that he had gone to the Spanish Madam, and I went to the front

window as I remembered going to see them pass, and I knew still how he had handed her down the terrace steps, smiling and speaking low to her. I could hear his voice in my mind, see his gesture as he pulled a yellow rose for her to put in her hair. It was all so clear, it seemed yesterday, and I looked at my own face in the glass and cried because my eyes were not black and my hair like the Spaniard, seeing he thought so much of her charm. And I remembered every sound of his laugh and whistle, and the careless jolly sailor song, sung to her lute:

“‘ Oh, ladies fayre, a sailor’s harte
Is deeper than the sea.’

Oh, I remembered all the torture of watching their falsehood and treachery to me day by day. When Anne helped me back to every-day life with strong salts, I seemed to wake a little, and I came down to lunch. And then came the doctor’s story of Treeby water, and I went with him to the cliffs above the village and watched him go down the road, and then came memory with a sting again—that *I* had taken Treeby water, turned it out of its course, and flung it over Park Cliffs. I know it seemed like madness. I’ve got my knowledge wrongly; but the facts are right, the water *was* taken from them.”

Michael pressed her waist tighter as her voice grew more troubled and excited.

“All right, wife o’ mine; don’t worry. We’ll find out what it is yet. Go on.”

“Michael,” she whispered, “do you believe in possession?”

“If you mean do I believe that *you* are possessed by a bad spirit, *No!*”

She drew a long breath.

“How can I be two people?” she asked.

"Some people seemed to be made up of half-a-dozen entities. Do you remember the old ballad, *Barbie*?—

"They'll turn me in your arms, Janet,
An adder and a snake;
But haud me fast, let me not pass
Gin ye wad be my maik."

That's what I'll do. Angel, devil, or witch, you're my wife."

"Oh, Michael, if you *could* hold me fast; but it is not my body, it is my whole self—mind and love and loyalty to you. It slips and slips out of my grasp. I sit thinking and longing for a black-bearded face with those great black eyes which now"—her voice sunk to a whisper—"I hate—oh, how I hate!"

A thrill ran through him as he held her fast.

"You spoke of clairvoyance once, child; there is nothing to trouble you so in that. Many a clairvoyant sees past scenes acted over again, and suffers and sympathizes with every creature with which she is put in touch. It must be bad enough. Considerably trying, I should think; but as we've got hold of a sort of explanation there's nothing to worry so much over."

"But I don't," she answered, her eyes looking dark and wide into his. "I see many scenes of all sorts, but I feel only as Gillian felt when she saw them. Where she was not present I see nothing. I hate what she hates, I love—no, no, I cannot! Oh, Michael, let me take your blue eyes into my very heart to shield me from that other face."

She stood on her feet with her hands on his shoulders her eyes looking piteously into his.

"Dear eyes," she whispered. "Oh, Michael, sweetheart, be faithful to me. The evil power must surely tire some time."

He pressed his lips to hers, and she kissed his eyes and forehead and his eyes again with a soft, piteous earnestness that shook his very soul with love and sorrow.

"Faithful, my darling?" he said; "why, I don't know how to be anything else. You are the very life and soul of me. What I hate most is the thought that you should slip from my love under the power of some other presence." Then, with a sudden thought: "Were you ever hypnotized?"

"No," she said, "never. I never liked anything to do with this questionable sort of half-scientific things. I like to know the hard, strict truth and understand things not experiment with half reality and half trickery. And you have seen as well as I that the strange thing in all my changed self is, that all I discover, or tell you, or remember is absolute fact—wherever we could test it, tangible, certain."

"Yes," he said gloomily, "there's some comfort for you that you have no illusions, really. Whatever is wrong your brain is not going. There must be some sort of influence or emanation in this place, in that room—that horrid room of yours, Barbara," he added with sudden animation; "I believe that has something uncanny in it. You must leave it; we'll go away for a while."

"Yes—yes," she answered; "in that there might be salvation for me. But—the water, Michael. It must be given back."

He looked in her face. It was Barbara's own sweet face, dewy brown eyes, and red young lips—not pinched with age, or drawn into wrinkled care.

"I meant it, you know, Michael, because I know it is true. The wrong was done, and by Gillian Trehanna, and we must undo it."

"Then we will, my Barbie; to-morrow we'll set about it."

A low growl from Lion startled them, and presently Deane, who had returned to her housekeeping cares, appeared to ask if the orders given for the preparation of guest rooms for three gentlemen for Thursday—"that's to-morrow, mum"—still held good.

Of course, in the agitating time through which the household had just passed, they had all forgotten that the Mottrams and Captain Lennox were due, according to invitation, next day, and now it was too late to stop them.

They were not expected till lunch-time, which still allowed of a hasty morning ride to Treeby, but which necessitated immediate housekeeping arrangements with Deane on the part of Barbara, much to the chagrin of Michael, who stood no chance of setting eyes upon his wife ill next morning.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE doctor's arrival at nine o'clock found the Squire and his wife both in readiness for an early ride with him to Treeby, and in spite of a showery sky and slippery roads they were eager to set off.

But Michael looked hard at his wife's dress. Tucked neatly and tightly around her neck into the opening of her habit was a kerchief of that rippling Indian silk.

"You've a strange attraction to that shiny stuff, Barbara," he said, "and I have a kind of detestation for it just as strange. I thought you said the scent of it made your head ache?"

"This piece seemed to have no scent," she said. "It was just a silly fancy of mine. But," doubtfully, "if you like I can take it off."

"Oh, never mind; I dare say it would interfere with the general architecture of your top story somehow to change now. It makes you look so white—that's the idea. But there's Brown Bess stamping. Let's be off."

They rode out along the great avenue to the lake, and on the way they passed a dark-skinned pedler with his box of wares slung over his shoulder. He looked hard at the riders, and his eyes seemed to "bore a hole in Barbara's collar," so she said, as they passed by.

"Queer thing to see a Hindu here," said Michael. "I suppose the servants will buy his rubbish."

Barbara laughed. "That is the man who is such an admirer of mine, and of my reputed gold and silver

gowns," and she repeated what the girl had told her the day before.

As they went on she grew quieter, and when they came to the lake she drew her veil closely over her face. They followed the course of the stream which fed this lake for some time.

There was no doubt that the watercourse had been artificially made, and Michael remarked incidentally to the doctor that Mrs. Trehanna had found out a good deal bearing on the subject, and most probably the ill will of the Treeby people was still owing to the old grievance of the water, which was certainly wrongly taken from them.

The hastily-arranged project had been for the Trehannas and the doctor to ride into Treeby village and try to speak to the most well-known men there—men with a little importance and position of their own. There were the innkeeper, the schoolmaster, a well-to-do fisherman, and a farmer, and these men practically led Treeby village; for what they agreed among themselves to say, Treeby said. To get the consent of all concerned to let Treeby water run down its own earlier channel to the sea was the great thing, for there were fields and cowsheds and hovels along what had been the watercourse.

The pace at which they rode was a good one, and before an hour was over, their horses' hoofs were clattering down the stony road on the near side of Treeby.

Children fled frightened out of the road; pigs, hens, and geese squeaked and grunted; and dark-looking faces appeared at doors or windows, but not a smile or word of salutation was offered. But by and by a whisper went round: " 'Tes doctor."

"Hey, doctor! you'm wanted bad tu Susy Drew's! Doctor! Jinny Ball be a-hollerin': her b'y be a'most dead."

They went on, however, to the inn, which stood facing

the sea almost in the center of the village and bay. An open space was before it; on one side was a steaming marsh, on the other the sea beyond and a few hovels.

The doctor flung himself from his horse and asked for the landlord.

A dirty-faced, slatternly girl came out, and after staring with a scowl at the other two riders grumbled out:

"Measter's bad. Hur be settin' e'en tu bar-rume, a-sheverin', an' hur saith doctor be to kum tu he."

"Will you just come in one moment, Squire, as you are here? Look here, Mary, send the ostler or somebody out to hold the horses. Mrs. Trehanna will be better outside than in, I think. We won't be a minute, Mrs. Trehanna, if you don't mind being left."

"Oh no," said Barbara, "the horses are quiet enough."

"Aye," growled a voice not far off. "Pore bastes. Yu do ride they like you du ride other folks' necks. Ef they wuz my mind you'd be kicked awver into bog."

From the corner near lounges up a big man in a sailor's jersey and stares at Mrs. Trehanna, and slowly from the beach, from cottages near, and from foul-smelling lanes come boys and women, old men and children. The houses are dirty with sunken doorways, and broken windows stuffed with rags. Decidedly the air from that marsh (once the river bed) is not pleasant. The village population stare insolently at Barbara, she sees them whisper and point.

Suddenly a young woman is seen running down the opposite hill road.

"Where's doctor? Oh Lord, w're es ee tu?" she cried.
"My Jan be awful bad."

"Doctor?" screams another woman shrilly. "Hur be en thear," pointing to the inn, "a-takin' of 'es glass 'long weth Squire."

"Fetch en aout, awl cale'n aout."

"What fur?" retorts another. "Hur don't du nort. What du hur care for the like o' we? He'm 'and-'n'-glove 'long weth Trehanna."

"Trehanna muck," growls another. "Us don't want 'em here to Treeby."

"Thayves they be! Divils!" screams an old hag near Barbara. "Lord send they may burn fur a drap o' watter, like to my Joanna ded afore her died. Lord send as every drop o' stolen watter may choke 'em, an' drown 'em, an' scal' 'em!". And she shook her fist close to Barbara's saddle

"Look to her!" screamed another; "'tes Gill Red-head. 'G a 'at o' this, Trehanna!"

"Hu! where be Treeby water?" growled a man suddenly, thrusting his head out so close to the head of Barbara's horse that the animal rose on his hind legs in affright; but Barbara's hand and voice brought him down in a moment, and, flashing round upon the man, she cried: "Treeby water, is it? You shall have it back!"

"Have et back, seth she. What be tellin' up? 'Tesourn be right. Du ee knew that thun?"

"Yes, Treeby water is yours by right, and you shall have it back. Bring it down from Carvarron," she cried, in a clear ringing voice which overpowered the sullen murmurs of the mob.

"Who be you ta talk o' givin' back?" sneered the man.

"Who am I? Why, Barbara Trehanna," she answered, snatching off her veil and looking fearlessly round the ring of faces. "Born Trehanna, married Trehanna, with power to get your rights for you."

"Yah, Gill Red-head! Down with Trehanna!" shouted one or two.

But Barbara's voice rose clear and loud.

"Yes, Gill Red-head! You are right! It was Gill Red-head that wronged Treeby, stole Treeby water, and she will give it back. Who'll follow and break the dam? Come with me, and if there's a man that can use a pick or a spade we'll have that dam down by noonday. Up to Carvarron, men, and we'll let loose the Treeby water."

She waved her hand, looking round eagerly.

"Who will come? Treeby shall get its rights. All Treeby knows how Gill Red-head cut off the water to spite the miller. You know what the river's like up there to Carvarron! Live, pure water for the parched lips down here! Look up there by the cliff-side," and she pointed with eager outstretched hand; "the water shall pour down below where the bridge was, down over the bog, out here through the creek. It shall come back! Water to drink, clear and fresh, cool to wash in, pure and sweet for the sick. No more fever, no more patrid wells.

"Come on, men, I'll go with you—Gill Red-head. See here!" and with a dexterous switch of her fingers she had out the pins in her hair and flung down a great coil that came switch! on the horse's back and unrolled into a mantle of brilliance. "Red-headed Gill of Trehanna! She wronged Treeby, and she'll right Treeby yet. Up we go to Carvarron! Down with the dam. Come on, men!" and sure enough, with a yell that rent the air, and came at last to the ears within the inn, a whole band of men, boys, and women rushed up the hill, snatching up any tool that came handy, and Barbara, far ahead, pushed her horse up the steep incline at breakneck pace, her glorious hair streaming in the wind as she encouraged the Treeby men by word and gesture to follow.

Squire Trehanna and the doctor heard the yell from the back room of the inn where they had been trying to get

some notion from the sick landlord of how to get the village to act in concert about the water. Those who had cabbage-beds or pigsties in the bed of the stream would raise an outcry, and the landlord was among them.

Though sullen and half drunk, half stupid with fever, he complained of the putrid wells, and refused to lift a finger to prepare the river's bed in the same breath. They were still arguing and persuading when the roar and yell from the road struck on their ears, and the clatter of horses' feet across the little bridge between the inn and the opposite road succeeded.

They rushed out of the inn in time to see Barbara and, her followers in full career up the hill, while streaming behind on the wind, floating over rider and saddle, curling and rolling out like a banner, flew the bright hair which had evoked the cry "Gill Red-head."

"Good God! they're mobbing her," cried Trehanna rushing to his horse.

"Naw, they beaint, Squire," said the man who had unwillingly stood holding the horses. "They'm off tu Carvarron dam, the dame herself put 'em up to ut, holerin' 'em to come on."

"Best possible thing she could have done, Squire! Take my word for it. Cuts the knot. They'll do it thoroughly and settle the consequences among themselves. Bravo, Mrs. Trehanna!" said Dr. Reade.

But Squire Trehanna was off at a red-hot pace, scattering the sparks from below the horse's hoofs as he tore up the hill, after the motley rout. As he followed, however, his anxious eyes soon discovered that Barbara was in no peril from the excited crowd. They were shouting, waving picks and shovels, panting and hoarse with the exertion of the tug uphill, and she calling to them in broadest dialect, encouraging, pointing to the wall of the dam

which crossed the valley just above, and urging her horse up the rocky road ahead of them.

Up they climbed, fishermen, laborers, loafers, fishers' wives, dirty children, tattered malions of all sorts, and stopped where Treeby water, issuing foaming from its headlong course down the hillside, was turned across the head of the valley by massive walls, between which it ran into Trehanna grounds.

A moment more, and the bright figure at the head of the crowd threaded the precarious path among the rocks, just below the dam, and cried:

"Here's the place. Just make one big breach with a pick, and the river itself will do the rest."

A dozen figures rushed forwards, and on all sides they came scrambling into the ravine.

"Back!" cried Barbara, "only strong men must come—only men who can run for their lives when the dam breaks."

But in another moment a horseman was by her side.

"You go back, Barbara," shouted her husband, "clear off the people on that side with you. I'll start the dam. Look here, men, see that spot between the buttresses, above the ledge? that's the place."

The work was short in the hands of such powerful figures when once a controlling will directed it.

Between two broad buttresses ran a ledge broad enough for a man to stand on, and above this ledge, in the center, was the place of attack, and from each side picks were brought to bear with mighty tearing strokes. Before long a small stream of water escaped, a few more strokes and the fall of a big stone was followed by a rush of the stream, and the men had barely time to escape before masonry, mud, rocks, stones, and water came rushing, roaring down the ravine, and Treeby water was given back.

Down the valley ran the water, and down the road

rushed the Treeby folk with a yell that echoed from the cliffs, warning those below of their danger in the river's path.

It was a wonderful sight, and the Squire and his wife sat motionless on their horses watching it.

The rolling of big stones over bushes and fences, the rush of water leaping in mad white bounds over the grass, the overwhelming of cabbage-gardens and destruction of pigsties, the scampering of pigs and donkeys, the running, rushing, and excitement were extraordinary; and at last when they saw far down the first wave of Treeby water reach the sea, bearing with it no more fatal burden than one fat pig, they drew a long breath and turned to ascend the road.

Just above, where the Carvarron road crossed to Trehanna, were three motionless horsemen—Captain Neil Lennox and the Mottrams. Barbara looked at them for one moment as if she had never seen them before.

Her whole heart and mind had been on fire with the excitement of the last hour.

The past wrong redressed, Gillian Trehanna had stoned. The old revengeful nature had succumbed, and for the moment Barbara, radiant, triumphant over the other self, looked like an angel, all glorious in the golden cloud of flowing hair which swept round her like wings in the wind.

"Good morning," cried a cheery voice, as Colonel Mottram raised his hat. "Our congratulations, Mrs. Trehanna; we saw the whole thing from this road. No wonder the Treebyites followed a flag like that."

Barbara, blushing and laughing, came up to them and explained.

"They took up the cry of 'Gill Red-head.' She it was who altered the course of the river and stole the water—

by appropriating the title, I got leave to redress the wrong she did. You see I have every right to the name. I suppose none of you, gentlemen, have a hairpin about you?"

They all assured her that hairpins were quite unnecessary in this case, and that they were thankful she would find none nearer than Trehanna.

"Shall I not?" she cried gaily. "If I am not mistaken there is that Indian pedler again; he'll have something," and she cantered off to a dark figure sitting lonely on the road with his box beside him.

She soon made him understand, and when the others came up she was rolling up the brilliant mass of hair and fastening it with glittering pins from his store, while the dark face with its long gleaming eyes watched her every movement, particularly the white neck in its sheeny kerchief, with an evil look.

"He's no bonny, yon pedler chiel," said Neil Lennox, as they walked their horses along the Trehanna road.

"No," said Barbara, with a little shudder; "I was wondering if he were a Thug. He seemed to be measuring the size and strength of my neck with his eyes, and making up his mind if I should strangle easily."

Captain Lennox and the Mottrams were on their way to Trehanna for the visit planned and promised some time before, and were still ignorant of the fire and its consequences, as well as of the facts—less likely to be carried to them by rumor, of the sickness and distress for water in Treeby village, and the reason for the expedition of the Trehannas to the place. From the hill above they had seen the threatening gestures and then Barbara's answer—the sudden fling of the hair to the wind, and the start up the hillside with the rabble at her heels.

There was plenty of matter for discussion during lunch-time, though the shady side of poor Aunt Eliza's case

and the mystery which overshadowed Barbara were naturally kept from strange ears.

After lunch Barbara withdrew for a while, and the men, after a walk in the grounds, got out a boat and put Colonel Mottram across to Penlooe to pay his promised visit to Farmer Cardew, while they returned to find a comfortable fire burning in the hall, and to dispose themselves for a smoke and a "crack," as Lennox said.

"Got a light, Trehanna?" asked Mottram, "my box is empty."

"Yes, here you are. Hang it, no. What on earth is *this?* Oh, here they are."

This was a tight little white shiny ball which he took from a small front pocket and looked at, while he handed the matches to Mottram.

"Oh, ah! I remember. No good now, anyway," and he flung the ball into the fire.

It was the piece of Indian silk which Barbara had taken off her hat on the day when they found the copper-mine, and which she had given to his keeping.

It fell on the burning logs, and naturally should have burst into flame, but it did not; instead, it curled and writhed and smouldered, and sent up a perfect cloud of pungent smoke.

"Poof! funny smell," said Mottram. "What's that stuff?"

"Nothing but a bit of white silk. The smell's a much larger size than the stuff."

"Queer. Where on earth have I smelt a smell like that? Oh, I know. It brings up a regular panorama of mummies and blackies. Do you remember one time when we fired a whole cargo of coffins and defunct Pharoahs and cats and things to keep up a scare for the prowling 'beastesses'? That's the smell, Trehanna."

"Is it? Perhaps it is. Strange. There's nothing like a smell for bringing up a recollection. A thing that's been drowned in the depths of a man's internal consciousness, with no reason for ever turning up, hops into daylight *apropos* of an old ribes tree, or an opened drawer. This thing has a queer scent, though. Do you dislike it, Lennox?"

"No, not exactly; but it's quite true that smells have an effect on the memory. I could swear I know that smell; seems like a kind of incense. Doesn't remind me of mummies, though. No—what is it? Oh, I know. I can see the place where I smelt it—a rummy little heathen temple out Thibet way. I mind that sort of incense coming pouring out of every crack of the place—not a smoke, but a maddening, irritating atmosphere that smelt like nothing earthly, and filled the compound and made the natives perfectly daft. It filled them with religious *afflatus*, Fettes said; but Fettes was the queerest chap for knowing things that respectable people don't know—nor want to," he went on musingly, staring at the fire.

"Go on," said Mottram; "tell us about the place. You know, I believe the seat of memory is in the nose."

"H'm; what becomes of your memory with a cold in the head?" asked Lennox. "I'm not good at describing," he went on. "Some of us had been visiting a man up country, pig-sticking; and Bentham, one of us—we were four—had had too many whisky-pegs, and came to grief, or his mare did, in a big hole just outside a village in the most tumble-down, out-of-the-world place you ever set eyes on. There we stayed, for Bentham's sake, for some hours, till we could get him off; and Fettes—awful queer chap, Black Infantry—he went snuffing round, you know, finding out what was going on at the temple. There was some kind of excitement afoot, but it would have been as

much as our lives were worth to poke our noses in among the priests. Fettes did, somehow, and he told me the queerest yarn you ever heard about this very scent—smoke—whatever you call it.”

“No; did he?” asked Trehanna. “Let’s hear.”

“Well, you know, you could never tell how much Fettes really believed about what he piled on to you; but his notions were different from most people’s. This time he said it was a tremendous big thing on in the temple. No less than the reincarnation of an old priest who had just died. That was rather thin, eh? But it was curious, and I got out of him that he had managed somehow to crawl into the building, and from some loophole had seen a very queer sight. There were ever so many priests salaaming away before a pile of cushions, and leaning back on those cushions sitting wide awake was a new-born baby. Anyhow, Fettes said he wasn’t more than a foot and a half long at the outside, and had a kind of band round his tummy, but his head and arms and legs were bare, ordinary human flesh and blood, baby limbs—like any other little shiny brown brat. But he didn’t howl, you know, or wriggle, or behave like a new-born child. He had his eyes wide open, as serious as could be, staring at those priests, and when they spoke to him *he answered back.*

“Of course nobody could believe that, but Fettes turned as sulky as you please, and declared he hadn’t asked me to be allowed to tell me what he’d seen, and that if he told me a thing on his word as a gentleman, he’d trouble me not to call him a liar. He said the child spoke as clearly and well as if he’d been twenty, though with a child’s little treble pipe, you know, and that those around him had not the smallest doubt that he was the third or fourth incarnation of an old saint who had been born into this world some two hundred years ago. He said that they had braziers

burning all round with the queer incense, and that this scent had the power of rousing the dormant cells of individual memory in the brain, and letting a person remember his former life. We had tremendous palavers over it, for he had his theories all pat. For one thing, he declared that it is no more extraordinary for an individuality, or soul, or whatever you like to call it, to come back again than it is for a bodily type to repeat itself without being the copy of its own immediate parents or progenitors. Now, suppose we take a certain family and put the brothers and sisters side by side. They are often as different as light from darkness. Same parents, and one child black-haired, another flaxen, and another red."

"That's rare," said Mottram, "but possible perhaps. The queerest thing is that handsome parents sometimes have hideous children and *vice versa*."

"Well, then, children don't always inherit a bodily mold any more than they do a mental one, and a child is sometimes born who is exactly like some old buffer—no relation at all—who has been dead ever so long ago."

"Reincarnation of the old buffer?" laughed Mottram; "I think it is usual for him to be an ancestor, isn't it?"

"No, no," said Trehanna. "I know a Hungarian count who couldn't write a verse of poetry to save his life, and he is as exactly like the portraits of Shakespeare as if he had sat for them. Makes him wild to be told of it."

"Proof that mental and bodily molds don't necessarily correspond, that a man may look like Shakespeare and be a fool, and perhaps a man may think like Shakespeare and look a fool; but the inside of a head usually gets stamped through on the outside, in time. But look here. Children are often found who, without the slightest explainable reason, are gifted in a way in which their parents are not. Isn't that so?"

The others nodded.

"A poet is *born* sometimes to a father who couldn't put a decent thought into words to save his life. A musician starts with an instinctive feeling for sounds which no education can drum into his brother. A mechanical genius can see a reason why in construction, at an age which utterly flabbergasts his unmechanical parents. Now Fettes contends that genius is simply the result of reincarnation. That a chap who has reached some knowledge and experience in a thing isn't likely just to be made to spill the whole thing into nothingness after having used good mettle to get it, you know, and that therefore he is just moved on with his faculties dormant in a kind of instinct ready to wake into farther education in another body."

"You mean to say," said Trehanna, "that a musical genius, for instance, is born with all the knowledge of harmony and melody and construction reduced to a kind of essence called instinctive faculty or genius, which it has taken him all his lifetime in another body to acquire."

"I suppose so," said Lennox; "not a bad notion, you know—seems to equalize things a bit; otherwise why should one little brat sit up and play concertas in K minor, while his elder brother can't make out the difference between 'God Save the Queen' and 'Yankee Doodle' for the life of him?"

"In that way," said Trehanna, "successive incarnations would be a kind of distilling process; a genius should be something unearthly at last."

"Or down the other way, you know, if he goes on the wrong tack and gets republished without correction. Only, don't you see—according to Fettes—if the individual memory were there, likely enough there'd be ructions. It's all very well for a respectable old saint, in an out-of-

the-way province in an untraveled land, to renew his body every now and then under an unchanging sort of surrounding—same temple, same philosophy, same uneventful kind of jog-trot, don't you know. But to put some great man—poet, painter, general, what you like—into a nineteenth-century skin, with all his past and possibilities, would harrow up respectability and play the very deuce with peace and propriety. They'd be chock-full of prejudice; and, besides that, life would be a state of unprofitable kind of raking up of old troubles, I should think—man's character would be all jumbled up."

"Rather," said Trehanna, pulling his mustache and glaring moodily at the fire. What made him think of Barbara and her curious, complex existence?

"Now *I* should say to Fettes," said Mottram, sticking his feet out to the blaze and his thumbs in his waistcoat pocket: "Trot out your proofs. If you haven't any, it's simply a superfluous muddling up of the schemes of Providence according to the mystic proclivities of the present day."

"Of course his proof was what he saw," said Lennox.

"He and nobody else?" asked Trehanna.

"Not *I*, anyway; but I certainly smelt this perfume then and there."

"Well," said Mottram, yawning. "It had its mission. Got any saints or babies on the establishment, Trehanna? By the way, did you get this stuff here?" and he indicated the still smouldering mass.

"It is a piece of silk off my wife's hat. She pulled it off because she said the scent made her head ache, and I just stuffed it into my pocket for her and forgot it"; but his mind was busy recalling the occasions on which he had remarked the silk on his wife's head or dress. The kerchief had been on her head that night she sought the red book,

this silk on her hat when they sought the lost pit's mouth —nay, even to-day.

"Hullo, you fellows! how are you?" said a voice as Arthur Trehanna entered. "Barbara said you were here, Michael. I brought my sister over to say good-by. They'll be in the drawing-room by this time. We met Barbara on the terrace."

"Ah, is that you, Arthur? Considerable of a smoke here, isn't there? We'd better join the ladies. Lady Branscombe there too?"

"No; she sent her adieux and all that, you know. Says she's seedy."

CHAPTER XXIV

A MESSENGER was sent to Lady Branscombe with excuses for the non-appearance of Arthur and Hester at her dinner-table that night. They remained at Trehanna for the evening, and when Colonel Mottram returned, in the company of a weather-beaten man of decidedly nautical appearance whom he introduced to Squire Trehanna as Captain Prance, he found the whole society grouped about the bowling-green, where Barbara insisted on their trial of the ancient game.

She came up at once at the sight of her old friend.

"How do you do, Captain Prance," said she, holding out a hand to his great hairy paw. "Have you brought me the shells now that you promised?" she asked, laughing.

The old man was delighted to see her, but hurried and confused by her grand visitors, as he said; he had wanted just a word or else he would not have ventured to intrude.

Barbara scolded him gently for wishing to cut old friends.

His business seemed chiefly to warn her and Michael that the Hindu who had so combated his possession of the Indian silk which he had brought her on his last voyage had been known to declare that he would get it back.

He would rescue the holy thing from profane hands if he died in the attempt. He had worked his passage to Twalmouth on a ship of the same line as Captain Prance's *Osprey*, and was said to be in the neighborhood.

Squire Trehanna heard, and as the others came up it

was suggested that the dark-skinned pedler would be the pious pilgrim in search of what he could steal.

"That is the way he had heard of my gold and silver gowns," said Barbara.

"We'll let Lion loose," said Michael; "he will soon give an account of superfluous Orientals."

And Captain Prance took his leave.

It was after dinner; the long drawing-room was full of light and music and laughter, when Hester said:

"Barbara dear, do something for me, will you? They've all been talking about that Indian silk, and they are quite curious to see it. I've been telling the funny story about the girl as old as a grandmother and as young as a child. Go and put it on, there's a darling. What I saw up in your room—you know. It is quite finished enough just to slip loosely on. I'll come with you."

A few minutes more, and Hester came to the drawing-room door, exclaiming:

"Now any one that wants a new sensation just come to the picture gallery," and followed by the men she flitted up the broad staircase to the picture gallery, from the upper end of which a wonderful luminous apparition came slowly on.

It was Barbara, clad, it seemed, in rippling moonlighted water, so changeful and shining was her dress. It fastened in loose folds at the neck and, barely confined at the waist, flowed down over her feet and away behind her as she approached.

She was curiously quiet, though the lambent brown eyes were dilated with some inward fire.

"That is the dress which the Hindu wants," said Hester, exulting. "Small blame to him for admiring it; but it is far too pretty to dress a goggling idol in."

"It is a beautiful thing," said Colonel Mottram in his old-fashioned courtesy, "and it certainly suits the beautiful wearer; don't you think so, Mr. Trehanna?"

"Curious stuff," muttered Trehanna, passing his hand across his eyes as though they were dazzled while he looked at Barbara's face. She was not looking at him, but at the old portrait of Bevill Trehanna.

"Look, Colonel Mottram," said Hester, who seemed to have taken upon herself to be showwoman of the party. "Now you know the story of the silk, how its wearer was to be young and beautiful and old at the same time. Look here! Here is Barbara's portrait taken three hundred years ago," and she pointed to the picture of Dame Gillian in her sweeping shining robes upon the wall.

"Who is that?" asked Lennox. "Wonderful likeness," and he returned to Barbara.

"That," she answered, with a half-laugh—"that is Red-headed Gill."

As she spoke she started nervously, putting her hands to her head. Too late, for Hester had mischievously stolen behind her, and pulling out the pins which confined the coil of hair twisted round her head, it fell in all its weight, sweeping in waves down the folds of the silken skirt.

Michael bit his lips to keep in an angry word. How dared that girl profane the beauty which was his—his only—to all these gaping fools! Out in the oper^a to-day it had seemed different. Here, close to—

"Now, which is Gill Red-head?" laughed Hester in gleeful mischief.

"Is that complimentary epithet the lady's only name?" asked Mottram the younger.

"No," said Barbara with a certain erectness of bearing, as though answering in person for her ancestress; "Gillian de Lacey of Carvarron married Bevill Trehanna here,"

and she pointed to his portrait, "and brought all the mines and estates of Carvarron into the family. When she married she had been called the greatest beauty as well as the richest heiress in Cornwall. She brought prosperity to what had been but a needy estate, and a devotion to that man which was but ill requited. He was a sailor—look at him! With a sailor's tongue and a sailor's easy code of morals! His Gillian was his lode-star at home, he said—he'd many another abroad," and she laughed a hard little laugh. Michael looked sharply up and winced. It was not like Barbara. The others standing or lounging near had not lost a word.

"Was he such a squire of dames?" laughed Mottram the younger. "Sort of Conquering Hero look about him."

"Do you see the diamond on his finger?" Barbara went on. "It was given him by a Spanish lady whom he had taken captive on the high seas. Her husband had been killed in the taking of the ship. Good reason had Donna Tereza to hate her captor, but her Christian forgiveness was great, she loved her enemy. So Bevill brought her to Trehanna, a prisoner, awaiting ransom. It was long before the ransom came and Bevill was too magnanimous to despoil his fair captive of her jewels. He would not take them from the sleek black head, or the yellow neck which they adorned, to put them on a head which, so he said, had a natural crown of gold. Fair words—false to the very last; for he was false to his wedded wife for love of the Spanish woman. Then the ransom came and Donna Tereza departed by ship for Plymouth, there to join friends of her own, she said, who would take her to Spain. Lies! all lies. The ship went no farther, or returned to Treeby, and there the Treeby miller, whose son was one of Bevill's most trusted seamen, hid the woman till the time came for Bevill's ship, the *Golden Hope*, to sail for the Indies

again. It was not long. Long enough for stolen meetings in the cave by the cliff landing-steps. But what did the deceived Gillian know? It was night when Sir Bevill left his house and his wife and his two fair sons for the last time He had delayed too long, he said, waiting the high tide at the cliff, and he bade them all farewell while poor deceived Gillian wept in his arms. It was the last time. Scarcely was he gone into the night when a trusty steward whispered to Dame Gillian that he did not go alone.

"There in the cave on the cliff above the landing-steps waited Donna Tereza with all her goods and gear to go along with him."

Barbara had grown taller, it seemed, as she spoke. Pride, anger, revenge, all struggled for expression. Had she been; Dame Gillian herself telling her wrongs she could scarcely have been more breathless in her excitement.

Around her gathered the men, silent in their astonishment. What was the meaning of her strange words and manner?

She raised her hands to her forehead as if in pain.

"How it all comes back again!" she said, lifting her eyes to the portrait of the faithless sailor.

"It seemed so impossible, *impossible* for a man to go with his wife's tears and kisses on his cheek, her blessings and prayers in his ear, straight to his leman!" she sighed piteously. "He was scarcely gone before his wife knew of his falsehood, and was out in the damp starless night, away through the upper paths to avoid his eye, to the landing. There she stood, sure enough, Bevill's light o' love; the glare of a torch fell on the muffled, hooded figure standing above the steps calling—

"Is all ready below, Sefior?" And *his* voice answered

"Send down first John Rodda with the gear," and I tore the mufflings from her face and cried, 'Who is this

wanton who would carry shame aboard the *Golden Hope?*'

"She turned on me then, fierce and shrill, railing for railing, till Bevill Trehanna himself hurried up the steps and stood mute.

"'Is it this yellow unclean devil you will take to your arms,' I asked, 'instead of your wedded wife? Pure flesh and blood, sweet breath and honor, I brought to Bevill Trehanna—your taste must be sick, indeed, to fall on this black viper head who can ill mask her poison with paint and essences.'

"At that she rushed on me, mad with her fury, and lifted a gleaming dagger as she came. I felt the sharp thin cold of the knife in my bosom and cried, 'Oh, she has killed me!' But Hob Truscoe, faithful steward, sprang forward to seize her in the darkness and wrench the weapon from her hand, and she turned to flee and fell—oh, that scream!—she fell over the cliff's edge on to the sharp rocks and the sea below. Oh, God, that cry! When I awoke, drenched with rain and blood, I was alone till Hob Truscoe came back from the house with help to carry the dead body of his mistress, as he thought, to be stretched for her coffin.

"Ah, what a waking was that! Deserted, widowed for evermore. When both wife and wanton lay for dead Bevill Trehanna had clasped his hands to his head, crying, 'All this blood on my soul!' and fled down the steps and so to his ship and all his men after him; and whether he lived or died, or whether his ship was lost, no more was ever known, and Gillian Trehanna was a widow from that hour. Fondest love turned to deepest hate, no hope of happiness but in her revenge and in her children. But Heaven struck her again, in that her revenge recoiled on her own head through her little son. 'Oh, Philip, look!' and with a wild gesture

she pointed to the boy in his velvet dress who was pictured on the other side of Dame Gillian."

Barbara's auditors were spell-bound at the torrent of dramatic narrative. Half trying to wonder if she were delirious, half ready to pretend to be interested in a fine piece of impromptu recitation, still they felt a cold current which raised their hair and crept icily down their backs, a feeling that this was real.

"The only creature whom I could touch for the cruel stroke which had lost me all," she went on, "was the Treeby miller who had been the base go-between of the lying pair, in whose house the Spanish wanton had lain concealed. So soon as I could walk abroad I cut off the Treeby water from above the mill and turned it into Trehanna. Was it not mine? From the lake it rushed over the cliff, the landing-steps, cave and all, to hide that fatal spot from all eyes. If the woman's coffers and jewels were there, there they lie till she rise from the waves to seek them." She stopped, shivered, trembled.

"But my child!" she whispered, in such a tone of horror and anguish that her listeners shivered too.

"Not two days later they brought my boy to me dead, drowned in the lake his mother's revenge had made to tempt him. In his stiffened hand was his little boat. Oh, my boy!"

And she buried her face in her hands. There was no doubt that real emotion shook the girl from head to foot. The girl of twenty, who was telling of her husband, her rival, her children, all dead and moldering long ago.

It was horrible.

A long breath went through the room.

"My God! Are we all mad?" groaned Trehanna. "Barbara," and he went up to her, in spite of the men standing round, and drew her hands into his. "Child

you've forgotten the present and put your whole self in your story," he murmured. "Don't let your mind go back to these old things. Come back to to-day, my wife."

Then turning with a half-laugh to the others he said: "My wife tells a story well, eh? dramatically. But she is too much carried away for her own strength, and she's had a good deal of fatigue to-day. That's enough for to-night, I think. Shall we leave you and Hester to get this dress off, Barbara? We'll go down to the drawing-room."

"Ah, yes. Awf'lly interesting. Splendidly done, by Jove! After you, Lennox," said Mottram, as they took the hint at once and turned to go.

Michael did not follow them.

Arthur Trehanna, however, lingered in the shadow of the door. What was this strange thing? Was Barbara mad? and what was this new tone to his wife which Michael Trehanna took? Did they really understand each other and make a fool of *him*?

Barbara stood, her hands locked together, a frown of perplexity on her face, silent a moment. It seemed to her that a subtle odor rose in waves from her whole dress and person—waves of light, which entered her brain and showed her pictures of her past in a warm reality which it was impossible to doubt.

"Forgotten the present," she repeated. "No, I am in the present as I was then. But I know now. Michael, I know now. As surely as I am here now, so surely I was here. I, all those years ago. I *was* Gillian. I stood for that portrait—I, and Bevill passed his hand over my unbound hair, his brown sailor's hand, and jested about Trehanna gold."

What an awful thing! No ghost, no visitant from the other world could be so horrible as this uncanny spirit, old and deathless in the young blooming body.

Hester drew back, shaking from head to foot.

"Ah," cried Barbara, "you are afraid. You, who have not passed such martyrdom as I in fear of madness. But I am thankful to know at last. That is why I knew these rooms, these old walls, like the fingers on my hand, better—I can tell you my life, Gillian's life, year by year, day by day. Love! hatred! revenge! wickedness! O God, forgive me—all. But I have tried to atone—tried to atone. Can I die now, I wonder?"

Michael, white to the lips, stood before her, his eyes fixed on hers.

"Do you wish to go from me, Barbara?" he asked.

"Is she not gone, your Barbara?" asked the wonderful figure before him, all silver sheen and golden hair. "What is left in an old crone, once cast-off wife, then grandmother eight generations back, to please your fancy?"

"She is mad, Michael," came whispering from Hester's trembling lips, as she cowered into a niche in the wall.

"Better go down-stairs awhile, Hester," said Michael firmly. "It is this poisonous gown; that silk is saturated with a drug which affects the head. She'll take it off and be better. You go down and she'll soon be all right." So saying, he helped the trembling girl to her feet and to the door, whence she fled shaking to the lower story.

Michael stood still, leaning for one moment against the wall to steady himself. He was face to face with something his mind refused to grasp.

He had until now refused to think seriously of the morbid fancies and memories to which he had, half-unconsciously, relegated the phenomena of Barbara's knowledge and impressions.

But her words now, coming upon all the proofs which she had given of their validity, and having for back-

ground that story of the Indian Temple and its incense, had given him suddenly a strong feeling of reality and horror, against which his common sense struggled in vain.

What was this thing standing motionless before its own portrait?

He shrank back beyond the hard, tangible wall, in order to feel something at least real in protective solidity, while his heart hammered and his eyes were glued to the figure of his wife. Ghosts? Pah! he had never seen any, nor had any other sensible person. All one wanted was an explanation—and here. What flame was it lighting up those lambent brown eyes? Could it be possible that the light came from a something inhabiting the body of to-day, which had flickered out of those eyes in the picture three centuries before? Where had it been, then, through all that gulf of time? Lennox's wild, impossible tale of the reincarnation was a natural, comfortable doctrine compared to this. It was the unseen, awful knowledge, lying in the dark between those eyes, which chilled him through. He felt as if the cold vapor of three centuries' death stood between him and the woman he had called his.

What awful possibilities of unseen horror might not rise slowly from the depths of drowned consciousness drawn up by the compelling power of the drug! Was there any truth in the vulgar cry about lost souls? To-day in sober earnest, in every-day common sense, could this be Gillian still dreeing the ghastly weird of her probation and purgatory through all time?

Was this his mate?

She was standing like one breathless, bewildered by the rushing in her ears of sounds and voices unheard for centuries, her eyes wide with anguish, her lips parted as

though to question and stem the tide of memory and remorse, but no sound came.

Could they call to each other over that gulf of time and strangeness?

Slowly she moved closer to her own portrait and raised her hand with its long square-tipped flexible fingers as though comparing it with the flesh and blood portrayed before her.

The same, strikingly the same. Her eyes full of despair rose to the picture eyes. What was she murmuring to herself?

Michael bent forward to listen, and as he did so the light on a picture near him caught his eye. Strange how the merest chance may reveal a solution to a difficulty with which it seems in no way connected. It was the portrait of the old trooper; the only one of his ancestors whom Michael Trehanna resembled.

He glanced up, struck by the sudden thought, at the stern, dark blue eyes and square jaw above the leather jerkin and steel breastplate of the old soldier.

"What a fool I am!" he said to himself, "shuddering like a child in the dark because I don't know exactly when Barbara's soul came first out of Nature's mist any more than I do of my own."

"The look in old Captain Amos' eyes is exactly what I see in the glass when I brush my own hair every morning. And what do I care? What does any one care how many times he was sent to the boarding-school of this world to be prepared for real life? It's only the gruesomeness of having uncomfortable memories forced on one that is unhealthy. That beastly drug! Heaven only knows what I may have on my submerged conscience, I don't want to know. Why memory seems raised to a delirium, and all that Gillian ever did Barbara must agonize over."

He went quickly up to where Barbara had sunk forward on her knees below the portrait of little Philip. "The sins of the fathers! the sins of the fathers!" she was repeating over and over again.

He put his hands upon her arms to raise her up. "Barbara, my wife," he said, "wake up out of the old dreams, shake them off! Don't let them take all the life and courage out of you. Why should this old story trouble you now? It is all over, and the actors in it have had to give an account of it to their Maker long ago. Come, you would not take his place as Judge."

She looked up at him like one half-deafened by some shock, and answered in a cold, lifeless tone: "God's place? No, he has judged and condemned me, therefore I suffer."

"Condemned *you*, Barbara? How, to what?"

"To live forever in the hell-fire of memory!" and she shuddered in horror.

Michael took her two hands and wrung them. "This is a nightmare of the worst sort. And, as sure as we stand here, it is the drug, the cursed drugged silk, destroying your very reason. It is torture, my poor wife—my Barbie; take it off, and you will soon see how this fever dream will go."

She looked at him strangely.

"What drug are you talking of?" she asked. "You think I have lost my senses. I never had them all more fully and entirely, and I know and remember quite clearly that I *am* Gillian Trehanna, that I lived here three hundred years ago. I am rather old to be your wife."

"Old, are you? Well, supposing you were Gillian three hundred years ago? Suppose you were Joan of Arc before that? It may be. Why not? Just the same as you were a helpless baby at one time and a headstrong schoolgirl at another. The difference is no greater, only we are used to

these developments. What is to hinder me from having been that stern-faced old trooper yonder? Who knows what cant I may have snuffed or what real, rigid righteousness and unmercifulness I may have shown? There's all the makings of it in my nineteenth-century Trehannaship. The only thing is that I don't remember it, and you—lately (mind you, only lately)—*have* done; and I tell you plainly that this unnatural excitement of the memory, this sort of fever of the brain, is owing to a certain drug, a preparation in which your Indian silk has been dipped. Off with it, Barbara, and we shall be our sane, natural selves in five minutes."

She raised her eyes with a half-frown.

"What I know myself to be. How can I change?"

"Look at me straight, Barbara. Have you forgotten my love for you, if your memory is so keen?"

She looked at him for a moment, fascinated by his earnest gaze.

"Yes," she said at last, "I had forgotten. Then I *can* forget."

"Forget that, if you dare. No, you are *mine*. Old experiences may go. They have helped to make my wife of to-day, there let them rest; but the *now* Barbara Trehanna is *only* Barbara and Michael Trehanna's wife, and not the owner of yonder starched prim dame in a straight gown, who called Captain Amos husband. But to be sure we must get rid of the fumes of this silk. It is their vapor works all the mischief. Come, my darling."

Putting his arm about her he would have drawn her away.

"What do you mean?" she asked. "Are you trying to concoct another theory to disprove what I say?"

"The theory is not mine at all," he answered. "This shining, silky stuff has been steeped in a poisonous prepa-

ration. It is an Indian drug. Lennox says that he has heard of it in India. A little piece that you gave me from your hat got burnt this afternoon, and he recognized the smell you always spoke of. It is specially prepared to work on the brain and bring up the past; exciting certain cells in the brain to reception of past impressions. It has impressed the past of these surroundings upon you whenever you wore that silk, or any part of it. The longer you wear it, the more effect it will have on the brain. Off with it, dear! it is a cursed, unnatural thing."

She looked at him incredulously.

"You mean that it unsettles the reason?"

"Take it off, Barbie, and you will see how it has distorted everything," and he tried to unfasten it at her neck but she shrank from his touch.

"Barbara, my darling, do this for me. There is no reason why you should keep the thing on. Off with it. Come to your own room."

He drew her along half unwilling, half perplexed. As they reached her door, however, they saw the maid, Anne moving about in the lighted apartment, putting the bed into sleeping order for the mistress who had lain there and died in that very bed three centuries before, and who was now coming back to it again with the horror of that memory newly awakened upon her.

As Michael saw the maid he stopped, taking his arm from his wife's waist, while a tinge of red touched his bronzed cheeks.

He had never entered that room with the impunity of a husband.

The sight of the maid daunted him, but Barbara's face was set and white.

No thought of the shyness of a young girl wife brought even the faintest suspicion of a blush to her face. As she

had said, Barbara was gone, only the ghost of Gillian, long dead, was left.

"Your maid will help you," said Michael, stopping short; "I will wait for you," and the door shut upon him as he turned away to pace the gallery.

But the door on the other side shut on Anne at the same time, for seeing her mistress enter with her husband she had quietly withdrawn. Barbara, scarcely thinking of what she was doing, crossed the floor to call her back, but on opening the door found that the girl was gone, and from the great bare window of what had once been Sir Bevill's room looking out upon the sea, there streamed in all the glory of the full moon.

What memories did that flood of silver call up in the harassed brain?

Barbara stood still.

She could see the long glittering line of sea lying between the high cliffs and the horizon, and her gaze followed up to the left, to the rocks, where Treeby river for so many years had flung sheets of water splashing on to the crags below.

The rocks were dry now.

There lay the cave, its entrance uncovered to-night for the first time for three hundred years.

Were the Spanish woman's coffers still there? Was there evidence yet, in the shape of letters or tokens, of Bevill's falsehood?

For a while she stood still.

Then turning from the window she left the room, gliding swiftly down the side staircase, and out at the door which she had entered as a bride, and away into the night.

CHAPTER XXV

HESTER TREHANNA had crept trembling down from the gallery where Michael was reasoning with Barbara, and at last sat crouching in the staircase, when a figure came swiftly out of a dark shadow near and caught her by the arm. She gave a frightened cry.

"Hush, silly!" cried Arthur, for it was he. "We've got to make our good-bies and go, I am sure it's time. Barbara is as mad as a hatter, and Michael is a colossal idiot. They'll do just as well without us, so I'll give orders for some kind of a turnout to be sent round for us. They've got carriages enough in these days. And you'll just get your hat on as fast as you like."

"Oh, Arthur! Go just now? I can't; I must wait and see."

"Wait for what?"

"Poor Barbara. It is so dreadful."

"Dreadful? Pah! it's sickening. There's she talking pure lunacy by the yard, and going on like a crazy creature, and Michael making love and piling on the trashiest sentiment I ever heard. By Jove! talk about rot! Here, let's get out. Come on now, no fooling."

He was in as savage a temper as Hester had ever seen him. Here was something utterly beyond the reach of his understanding or his sympathies. He had always had a kind of vague hope of getting Barbara into his power yet. And now it was sickening, as he said. A woman

to be in such sore need of a strong heart to lean upon, and a man with such a heart to give her. Both were repulsive. Was it the sound of voices presently which brought Michael from his waiting in the gallery to the stair-head?

"Oh, there you are, Michael," said Arthur, as easily as his temper would allow him. "We were just thinking of saying good night. Time to be off, don't you think? People keep early hours in these parts, you know."

"Oh yes," said their host calmly. "I'll order—would you prefer a closed carriage, Hester?"

"Anything," said Hester. "But, Michael, let me, do let me stay with Barbara. She must have got that fever from Treeby. I've been thinking. That's it. I can nurse. Let me stay."

Arthur's face was not pleasant.

"You'd only make more trouble, Hester, and catch it yourself," he said sharply.

"Don't be afraid," said Michael. "Typhoid fever doesn't come on like that. But Barbara has had a great shock—indeed, more than one—these last few days, and that silk is saturated with a drug which affects the brain, that's all. She's taking it off and will be—all right in a few minutes."

He was going to say, "She will be herself," but stopped; which self would she be?

He looked anxiously along the gallery. No sign of Barbara yet.

There was no help for it. He must order the carriage, and await her below.

He went down-stairs with his cousins, and having sent directions to the stable, they entered the drawing-room, where the other three men looked up sharply for a moment. It was uncomfortable, an embarrassed silence reigned, and there was an odd atmosphere of expectation; they seemed to be awaiting—what?

Presently Lennox said in a low voice to Michael, who was standing near him:

"I'd fling that gown in the fire, Trehanna, if I were you," and then commenced a minute examination of a photograph on the table.

Then old Colonel Mottram came round to where Trehanna stood, and said:

"That Hindu fellow has been up to some conjuring tricks on Mrs. Trehanna, my dear sir. They're a treacherous lot, and if you had seen and heard the things they do to upset a man's judgment you'd believe me. I almost think I'd let the man have the gown to get rid of him."

"Yes, I dare say you're right," said Trehanna. "My wife will get it off and be all right again. I think the smell of it is most unhealthy. It has been bleached or dyed or something with chemicals which aren't good for the head. She's taking it off."

They approached the long windows which opened on to the terrace.

The room was warm, and one of them was open.

"What a lovely night it has turned out!" said Mottram the younger. "Hullo! I say! What's that far up the avenue? Here, Trehanna!"

But Trehanna was looking over his shoulder.

"Oh, my God!" he said, in a whisper of dismay, and was out in another minute and tearing up along the park.

The others followed him, but they were far behind, and the gleaming figure which Mottram had seen flitting through the alternate shine and shadow of the long strip of avenue had vanished.

Trehanna kept up a pace he would almost have thought impossible, and so came out from among the trees in time to see the unconscious shining figure far up the narrow path to the cliff landing-steps. Then he remarked what

he had not seen before—that behind the silvery figure were two dark ones who kept in the shadow, on either side of the road.

One seemed much broader and more awkward than the other, who crept in and out amidst shade and bushes with a lithe sinewy movement like a snake.

They were tracking Barbara, unknown to her. The blood was singing in Michael's ears, and his tongue was parched and useless to cry out, as at last he slackened his pace.

Barbara was standing still in the brilliant moonlight, on the highest point of the cliff. What would she do?

They saw her lift her white face to the sky, and from her bare head they saw the long shining ripples of hair flowing below her knee.

A silvery foam of silk lay on the rocky path behind her as she began slowly to descend the steps.

Up rushed the two black figures.

The stouter one did not stop at the steps, but went along the cliff above to the place where Treeby river had always flowed over the rocks and where weeds and steaming soil were still dank with the moisture of centuries; but the thin, slight shadow crept from the dark, crouching in the moonlight, but clearly at last if Barbara had only looked back.

It was the Hindu following the fated silk and nearer now to getting it than ever before.

Michael fled up the path. He dared not call lest he should startle Barbara on her perilous path, for now, having descended to the sharp corner of the cliff, she left the steps, and actually began to follow the slippery winding path which threaded the rocks to the left below the cliff head towards the cave mouth which lay gaping black in front of her.

Michael reached the top of the steps and stood still in horror.

Below the cave the cliffs fell sheer into the water, but on this side near the steps the rocks sloped down into sharp jutting crags.

He thought of the fall of the Spanish woman with a shudder as he saw Barbara pass out round the perilous rock above the crags, and winding on, where it seemed that scarcely a goat could poise itself, reach the path before the cave.

The black shadow which crept after her was not so far when a rush of earth and stones came roaring down from the cliff head above the cave.

There was a scream, the path was covered with *débris* which crashed and splashed into the sea below—but the white figure was gone.

The scream was re-echoed in harsher tones from above. Agonized, horrible sounds, as if some wild beast were struggling for life, were heard, and then, with another rush of stones, a heavy body fell with a sickening thud, first on the rocky path outside the cave, and then rolling over with a plunge into the sea below.

Michael shouted for help, and from above the figures of Lennox and the Mottrams came hurrying down after him; for already, he scarcely knew how, he had reached the cliff foot and was struggling with the water.

He scarcely heeded the continuing fall of earth from above; he was watching with agonized hope, scarcely differing from despair, the black shadowy waters in the little creek between the cliffs.

Here she must have fallen if she had fallen clear of the rocks.

“Yes, oh God!—a hand—something white.” She was rising, the white dress floating up to the surface.

With desperate strokes he began to swim towards her as she again began to sink.

"Barbara, keep up! I'm coming!" he cried, when something black clutched the white robe and dived below. It was the Hindu. "Will he drown her for the sake of robbing her body?" thought Michael.

But the next moment he saw that the man had put his head beneath her arm, which he was holding firmly around his own neck while he swam with the other arm.

A moment more, and Michael grasped the streaming hair and drew his wife to the steps. She was quite unconscious.

Half-a-dozen hands were held out to grasp her, while a big, shaggy form pressed up to her, as Lion vainly tried to lick her face.

"You shall have the silk, man," cried Michael to the Hindu. "You have earned it, if she lives. Pray God she may not have had a blow! Quick, up with her arms! Turn her over!" And he and Colonel Mottram between them tore off the fatal silk and bared her neck and shoulders to wrap them in warm coats, and by friction and every available means tried to bring back some spark of life.

It lasted a while before Michael felt a faint heart-beat beneath his hand, and holding her tight to his breast that the fevered warmth of his own heart should stimulate the pulse of hers, he kept up his efforts till breathing was re-established.

But that was all.

"Thank God, she lives!" he exclaimed. "Barbara! Barbara! try and speak!"

But it was useless.

Whether she had been stunned by the fall of stones which flung her from the path into the sea, or whether she had some injury they could not see, it was impossible to tell; but she did not open her eyes.

It was a sorrowful procession which carried her back through the moonlighted avenue to the house—as Gillian had been carried on the fatal night three centuries before.

"Bring her in here," said Michael, as they reached the hall; and he laid Barbara on his own bed in the den he had used as a boy, and which had risen now to the title of "Squire's room."

She was quite unconscious, and though the nurse, who had come from Miss Griffith's room in hot haste, examined her carefully and had given her every restorative in her power with the help of Hester and the faithful Deane, unconscious she remained. She was breathing very faintly, that was all, and with that they had to be satisfied till the doctor came.

On his arrival Dr. Reade was as powerless as the others, but gave them a little comfort nevertheless.

"Let her alone, my dear sir," he said, "let her alone. They've managed to get a few drops of brandy down her throat, and you must just wait. It is my opinion that the sudden fall from a height into that cold water has given a sort of shock to the brain, from which it will take a time to recover. Keep her quiet—that's all,—and keep her warm. She'll come round, I think. While there's life there's hope, you know. I'll get Miss Vaughan to come up; good thing to have a well-known voice and face near. Awful thing about Trudgeon, eh? I'm afraid Lion was executioner this time; the man's throat is torn most frightfully."

"What do you mean?" asked Michael.

His thoughts had been so concentrated upon his wife that he had not given a moment to the question as to whose had been the second and heavier body to fall into the water from the cliff head, nor whence had come the groans and yells after Barbara's scream.

There was no doubt that Dicky Trudgeon had a grudge

against Barbara for being the means of saving Trehanna from his clutches in the first place, and, as he supposed for loosing the dog upon him on the night of the fire. He had allied himself with the Hindu for his own purposes, and both of them were prowling about the grounds when they caught sight of Barbara in the shining silk go out of the house alone.

When Barbara took the path to the cave, Dicky Trudgeon went up to a post of vantage above, to the old bed of Treeby river, and Lennox and the Mottrams, coming up after Michael, saw the man, outlined against the sky, deliberately push the earth and stones over the cliff on to the path below.

But scarcely had he done so than Lion flew past them from behind and hurled himself upon his old enemy.

He had not forgotten Dicky and the final blow of the night of the fire, and the sounds of the conflict were terrible—the snarling and snatching of the dog, and the cries and struggles of his opponent, ending in the fearful fall backwards over the cliff of Dicky Trudgeon. It was the Hindu left alone with the fatal silk, after the procession of Barbara's bearers had left the cliff, who saw a hideous corpse rise to the surface of the water, and recalled one of the servants to help dispose of it. Life was completely extinct.

Miss Vaughan came up to Trehanna in the early morning, and Hester reluctantly left. Barbara lay still on the bed in Michael's room, with its boyish trophies on its walls, and its scanty drapery on the window,—the room she had never ventured to alter, indeed scarcely to enter, but had left to its master's will. By the bed sat that master now, looking at the unconscious figure of his wife.

They had taken away her dripping garments long ago, and laid her in warm dry clothing, wrapped in blankets,

with hot bottles at feet and hands, and the strongest salts and essences for brow and nostril.

But at last they had left her in peace.

She lay there white and still. And on one side of the bed sat Miss Vaughan, with red eyes and trembling lips, and near the window, standing with folded arms and lips compressed, his eyes never leaving the pure, peaceful face of his wife, was Michael Trehanna.

So she was dead *again*, he thought half idly to himself, in the sheer idiocy of grief.

Gillian had died once, and now she had died again. His foolish fancy, that if he kept her from the room and the bed in which Gillian had breathed her last, he should keep his hold upon Barbara, had been futile. Where had she gone now—leaving him? There were no tears in his eyes. Tears! What good were they? Even death was no good. Had she gone back to Bevill Trehanna? She had never been Michael's. There had been a dream of happy love, lasting a few hours. That was all. In all his life one half a day's real love. And this placid figure dreaming itself to death was all that was left. For if she woke it might still be to shudder at him and herself as victims of an impossible fate.

As he had stood motionless—for the last hour, he stood there still at noonday, with his eyes on Barbara's face, while Miss Vaughan laid her head, with the fast-running tears, on the bed.

Suddenly, with no warning, Barbara's closed eyelids rose, and the sweet brown eyes looked straight into his.

He had no power to move—no wish. He could not speak or even breathe.

Solemnly, quietly, the brown eyes looked full for a moment at him, and then closed. Only to open again, however, to wander over the wall behind him.

A paralyzing fear took Michael by the throat. Would this long insensibility have left its mark upon the brain? Would she never speak again? Was this Gillian or Barbara? He had noticed how very young and peaceful the fair sleeping face had looked. That awful expression of care and horror which characterized the wretched Gillian had not appeared but now. What soul was this looking out of these eyes?

He looked anxiously at her, and she moved her head, looked at him once more, then at herself in his bed, and a scarlet blush rose over cheek and neck.

"Who brought me here?" she asked.

An answering flush tinged his dark cheek, and a light of immense relief passed over his face, melting into inexpressible delight.

He understood that blush. It was *his* Barbara, *his wife* who had come back to him.

The care-worn woman who had known and despised love was gone. It was the young bride, in all her innocence of first love, who blushed to find herself thus in his room for the first time.

Miss Vaughan, in delighted surprise, sprang up at the sound of Barbara's voice, and enjoined silence and quiet, while she administered the restorative the doctor had left.

But Michael was kneeling beside her, holding a hand which he had found among the blankets, and kissing it whenever Miss Vaughan's back was turned.

Barbara was ordered not to talk; she obeyed by asking questions.

It seemed that she remembered falling into the water. She had had a very bad headache before, and had dreamed a lot about Dame Gillian. She was so tired of Dame Gillian. She never wanted to hear her name again. So

Michael had brought her there because it was the nearest place. Another blush.

"She was to lie still now till the doctor came," said Miss Vaughan.

"Oh no," she said, "she was very well, and would get up. She had no broken limbs, nor bruises, nor blue places—except the marks of fingers on one arm." That was where the Hindu had held it round his neck—but of that she knew nothing.

But Michael interposed his marital authority. She was to obey him, and lie still—and with a half-doubtful little laugh she obeyed. Michael offered to remain with her while Miss Vaughan lunched, and so he was left with his wife.

"My Barbara," he whispered, "I wonder how much you remember of yesterday, and how much you have forgotten?"

"Why should I forget?" she asked. "I remember giving the water to Treeby, but my headache began again at dinner, or soon after, and with these headaches are always associated thoughts of Dame Gillian. Don't let us think of her," she pleaded. "My head is so clear and painless now."

He looked longingly at her.

"You remember our quarrels, and our attempts at peace-making?"

Again she blushed.

"Yes," she said, smiling, half shamefacedly, half mischievously. "And now we shall have to settle about that incompatibility of temper. Is it Bulgaria you are going to?"

"Quite unnecessary. If I leave one seat of war here, I don't need to go and look for another. We might have a truce. I'll draw up the articles."

"Not at all. One half must come from my side."

"All right," said Michael. "Six from me, six from you."

"Why six—when you don't even know what they are?"

"Oh, I know what they are. See here," and before she could stop him he pressed his lips to hers: "One—two—three—No, that wasn't fair, Barbie! They must all be of equal length and importance. Oh, hang it! who's that?"

That was Deane the Inevitable, come to stay with her mistress while the Squire went down to luncheon, she said.

The Squire would fain have sent her off again with a flea in her ear for an officious meddler, but Dame Barbara, with as much composure as a crimson face and struggling dimples about the mouth would allow, declared herself hungry, and requested Michael to go to his own lunch and send her some.

So with the stringent command to Deane that she was not to talk nor let her mistress talk, he departed.

But Michael could not yet join the now happy faces round the luncheon-table. He must have a moment's breathing space to accustom himself to the transition from despair to such golden happiness.

Lennox and the Mottrams had not gone, but after the excitement and suspense of the night had been anxiously waiting for news of the return of consciousness to the girl, who, whether Gillian or Barbara, had passed through such a time of horror.

Miss Vaughan had given them the good news that Barbara seemed quite herself and, as far as they could find out, unhurt; and when a request came for lunch for the mistress, it was a comfortable prosaic ending to the strange drama of two souls which had been played.

So Michael went out quietly for a moment's pause and silence in his life into the old west garden—my lady's garden.

Was the drama really over? Heaven send there might be no new change!

It was Barbara who had survived the strange war of selves in one body of flesh.

Gillian was submerged. Had she been left in the sea, or did the weary fluttering ghost hover about the silk gown —gone now from Trehanna, please God, for ever?

There seemed to be no doubt that the memory of a former existence which had such an overpowering hold over Barbara as to change her very identity had emanated from the silk, like a perfume which was a possession in itself.

The strange thing was that, in spite of the living certainty that the two women were but distinct incorporations of one soul, they did not love each other.

The weary, discouraged Gillian had no sympathy with young loves and new interests, and was out of place in the healthy every-day life of the nineteenth century, and Barbara shrank in horror from Gillian, and it was strange that, with the fatigue of her former existence sponged out, Barbara's mind was left so fresh, so vigorous in its vitality.

Michael had dreaded to find a resigned, brooding woman, on whom old memories, though deadened, had left a withering, blighting effect.

But there was no doubt that with the loss of the memory that she had actually lived Gillian's life three hundred years ago, she had lost responsibility, experience, and remorse; she was as fresh in her mischievous young innocence as a pure untried girl could be. Standing on the brink of womanhood and wifehood, behind her were only the ignorant happy days of girlhood, and she played with the first waves of the sea of love before her, half laughing, half frightened at their power.

And yet behind her were the dreams with which she had struggled. Dreams of knowledge which she had indignantly repelled, as witness her dislike to the very idea of sullyng Barbara's memory with the loves of Bevill.

Michael was turning these things over in his own mind as he came upon Lennox sauntering towards him with a cigar in his mouth. "Come to say good-by," he said.

"Going?" asked Michael. "No, look here, don't go. You were going to stay some days, and Barbara will be so vexed to miss you."

"Wouldn't you rather be alone?" asked Lennox meaningly. "Miss Vaughan told us that your wife had recovered consciousness, and seemed so pleased and happy that none of us asked more."

"More?"

"Yes—well, Miss Vaughan was not here last night. Did you tell her all that happened?"

"Ah—no, I didn't. I don't think any one except my two cousins know more than that we all went to the cliff head, and Barbara lost her footing and fell into the sea."

"Oh, well. I think people know that Trudgeon flung down stones on her and caused her fall, you know. But what does—ah—your wife say?"

He did not call her Barbara, Michael noticed.

"She remembers very little, has not asked for the silk, and says she is sick of Dame Gillian. She is brighter and happier than I have seen her for a long time."

"Then the trouble is over, is it? She is Barbara to herself and everybody else?"

"Just now she is, thank God, but it will be a while before we can be certain of no relapse."

"Man! There's no fear with the silk gone, if she has once forgotten."

"You put it all down to the silk, then?"

"All? Well, her memory of facts I do, but the facts can't be put down to anything, I suppose, but history. Did you ever find she was mistaken in anything of Gillian's life?"

"No, and I must say that the fortune of Trehanna has rested on her knowledge. You heard that she found the copper. Well, she just *remembered* the book with a map of Carvarron in it, and then remembered the lie of the pit."

"But had she that dress on then?"

"No, only a bit of the stuff," and Michael proceeded to recount the strange memories always in connection with the silk up to the remorse about Treeby water when Barbara had been for hours sewing and bending over the silk. Then he told of her fitful changes of character, not only of mood and humor but of disposition, turning from frank innocent girlhood to moody jealous experience of every kind of grief, as Barbara became Gillian, till she ended with throwing off Barbara altogether, as a new cloak on an old form, and declared she was and had always been Gillian.

"Who'll undertake to say she wasn't?" asked Lennox.

"Not I; but if she goes back again to it, it will kill her."

"Why should it? You know there's no disgrace, no—no anything—why a man should be frightened to hear that he had been Julius Cæsar, or Nebuchadnezzar, or any one else in a former state. I'd rather that than be convinced that I was an ape."

"Of course, a thing that is general, abstract sort of doctrine that everybody holds, is one thing. Personal experience is another, and then I must say that the horror of the whole thing to Barbara and all of us is that she got such an overwhelming dose of memory that it was by no means ancient history, but a thing of yesterday, served up to her hot, with all the wounds bleeding. A woman

may quite well become a widow, lose all her children, and in time fall in love and marry again, as Gillian would have done in becoming Barbara. But, maddened with that drugged memory, Gillian could not forget a single feeling, nor think herself into other circumstances. In fact she became a kind of ghost, you know, haunting the old spot, and then shrinking into intense terror at the thought that she herself had been dead and buried three hundred years ago. Oh! it was ghastly."

"I see," said Lennox, nodding sagely. "All the same, you know, we may thank the discovery of that incense smell yesterday for a way out of the puzzle."

"Yes, if the solution isn't really as mad as any part of the whole business. Only this: keep it dark, there's a good fellow. I sha'n't let Barbara know the key to the riddle unless she remembers her ultimate discovery that she *was* Gillian. My greatest hope is that the abnormal action on the memory may have fatigued it, and left her unwilling to think back. I know Mottram will shut up if I ask him, and the two Trehannas believe that the silk made Barbara light-headed last night, no more."

"Of course," said Lennox. "Nobody'd believe the story you know either, so we may be content not to tell it. By the way, though, about that cave: it would be a good thing to have a look at it, and shut its mouth before Barbara thinks back on it. If you'll give me a bit of rope, and a pick of some sort, I'll go and report."

CHAPTER XXVI

AS a matter of fact, not only Lennox, but Mottram the younger, set out on their adventure, and returned, some hours later, looking very tired, considerably muddy, and mysterious. They had brought a certain square object, tied up in Lennox's plaid and roped over, and they deposited this at dusk in a small, out-of-the-way tool-house, now unused, while they sought and brought Trehanna and a chisel to open it.

It took more than a chisel to hammer open the rusty bound box, which, as they said, they had found behind a heap of rubbish in the cave, as though purposely concealed. At last they wrenched the cover off, and a layer of discolored silk being lifted, all sorts of small ornaments for a woman's toilet were discovered, jewelled combs, bodkins, bracelets, and in a small oval case a miniature of a dark-bearded man with Sir Bevill's eyes, and a scar across his cheek.

"By George! there's Bevill, or Devil himself, and the scar Barbara always said he had, but which is not shown in the picture in the gallery," cried Michael. "I am afraid poor Gillian had reason to mistrust the Spanish madam with his portrait in her keeping—all done up with pearls too. They're discolored, but I dare say they were very fine when she got it. What's this, letters? H'm! I'll try and read 'em some day."

Below were jewels, some tarnished and dimmed with age and damp, others still clear and brilliant, but none of

remarkable value—and slipped inside a man's leather glove, which bore traces of wear, was a massive crucifix all studded with diamonds.

"Oh, Lord, what a thing!" said Mottram. "I'd lay anything that's the lover's glove—a *gage d'amour* from the devil, tempting to deadly sin—and the crucifix wrapped up in it by way of disinfectant. I am rather glad Mrs. Trehanna is not here."

"Give it here," said Trehanna; and holding it gingerly, he put the matchbox inside the glove and set a light to it, and put the crucifix in his pocket. The glove was soon gone, the smell of sulphur being quite appropriate, as Mottram remarked. "Pah! makes one sick after all these years," said Michael. "I say, if you fellows could cram some of the things into pockets—I've got some—we'll break up the box and pitch it into the sea, hey? I'd rather Barbara did not see them. I've a sort of feeling that she'd recognize them, you know."

"All right."

And a few minutes later the conspirators entered the house as though returning from an excursion round the cliffs.

Michael found his "den" restored to bachelor beatitude, and coming into the hall before dinner, discovered a radiant creature in evening dress seated with Miss Vaughan by the big fireplace, where logs crackling briskly sent out a ruddy light in the ancient room.

"Ah, Barbara," he said, as carelessly as his beating heart would let him. "Feeling better now?" And bending down like a cool, well-trained husband, he kissed her audaciously before Miss Vaughan's eyes. He carried off the position with apparent ease, but poor Barbara had to bend over Lion to hide the blushes which this unusual behavior called forth.

She had on a velvet gown the color of her eyes, but the pale pink satin which peeped from its folds across her breast was not so bright as her cheeks.

"By the way, Squire Michael," said Miss Vaughan innocently, "I can't make out from Barbara however she came by such an accident. I suppose she had gone on in front of you in her usual headlong fashion. She says she has forgotten. She only wants to escape a scolding, I think."

"No," said Barbara, looking at her with a half-troubled misty look. "I get the scolding anyway—but—I—"

"Yes, she was ahead, you know," said Michael, inwardly praying for inspiration, "and the moonlight is treacherous."

"But what daft people to run out of the house at—what time?—ten o'clock at night?"

"It seems like a very hazy dream," said Barbara, evidently struggling for memory.

"Look here," said Michael, with a sudden determination. "We've found out why that Hindu wanted the silk back. It's dangerous. Been steeped in drugs which have an effect on the brain, in readiness for some heathen rite or other. That's why it gave Barbara headaches. She put it on last night, and it made her feel ill, awfully bad, you know. And she took it into her head to try the air, and what with not being up to much, you know, and the slippery damp of the steps where Treeby river used to go over, it is no wonder she went in, even if Dicky Trudgeon hadn't taken to flinging stones from above."

"Ah, that is how you came to go out," said Miss Vaughan.

"Yes, it was Barbara's idea first."

Barbara was watching him.

"Curious about that silk," she said; "I always said it gave headaches, only you never noticed the smell, and it was so pretty."

"Well, it is gone, dear," said Michael, almost humbly; "I gave it to the dark-skinned fellow by way of reward for pulling you out of the water."

"You were quite right," said Barbara. "The pain used to make me feel so used up and bad-tempered. And I dreamed such ridiculous things sometimes, afterwards," and she looked up sideways, and yet earnestly, at Michael.

"Oh, I am thankful if it is gone, in that case," said Miss Vaughan. "Dear me! I've forgotten my glasses," and she went off in search of them.

Barbara came up to Michael with a look of wistful shyness in her eyes.

"Michael," she said, "do you know it is quite curious, but I've developed an awfully bad memory all of a sudden. Hester asked me last night to put on that dress, and I did, and I think I went to sleep over it, for I don't remember anything about headaches. I was very tired, you know, and I think I must have been sleep-walking, for I don't remember a single thing till I fell into the water."

"That's it, darling," said Michael, jumping at the chance; "the silk acted on the brain, and made you miserable, you know, half awake, and half of you really asleep and dreaming, and you had such a fancy for sixteenth-century doings that you dreamt them over and over, till, between the surroundings here and the fumes of the silk stuff, you were sort of hypnotized or something."

"Ah," said she doubtfully, "I should like to understand enough to put things together."

"Don't bother over them, if you love me, Barbie; it will make you uncomfortable in the effort. The action on the brain was poisonous, and as the effect seems to have disappeared with the drug, I should certainly not try to recall it."

"Has it? I think my brain has a hole in it. It's in a state of bad repair. Do you like a wife of that kind?"

"This kind? The Barbara kind? It's just the very essence of my heart's desire. I don't think any man ever had a wife who was just such a delicious piece of perfectness for him every way. By the way, though, your memory is bad, you say; that accounts for your forgetting to draw up those articles. There are six on your side. I am quite ready to consider them, if you will bring them forward."

"I don't think that those already presented have been sufficiently considered," she said demurely, her lips not six inches from his mustache.

"No, they weren't," he whispered. "The war is over, but we won't have a truce only. The fortress surrenders, and opens its gates to the enemy," and taking her two hands he put them around his own neck. "Barbie, for once tell me truly, do you really love me?"

"Oh, Michael, as if you did not know that you are the one thing in this world on which my very soul hangs! Don't ever put me far off. I feel as if something had tried to put me away from you, but I forgot."

"Forget all but that I never want you out of my heart or my arms. The Church's blessing gave you the name of wife, but God's mercy has given you the wife's heart. We've no need of more ceremonies, sweetheart. What God has put together will defy man or devil to sunder. That's so, my own?"

"Yes. He gave us to each other, till death—and after, if He will."

Then they were silent, though their lips still spoke.

Dr. Reade timed his return from his usual Treeby visit so well as to arrive at Trehanna just at dinner-time.

"So I've lost a patient," he said. "Lady Branscombe

goes up to London by the night train. I suppose she is to be the next Mrs. Trehanna, isn't she?"

"Indeed," said Michael calmly. "Is it announced?"

"Same thing. We do these things neatly nowadays, you know—at least, those of us who don't want to electrify a dinner-table, like some friends of mine. I just met them taking a drive. Nice little carriage, that of hers! I told them my news—Mrs. Trehanna's recovery, and all that, don't you see; and the lady said, 'So charmed. Drive on, Arthur, *dear*. Good-by.' And there you are; all in a nutshell."

"Peace to their ashes!" murmured Michael, low.

"Well, now," said Dr. Reade to the Squire and his wife, after leaving the drawing-room and making his private adieux, "Mrs. Trehanna is looking much better to-night than she has looked lately; but I think she needs a change of air and scene for a while, to get rid of these headaches, and—so on. I suppose you can't leave Miss Griffith and the place, Squire; but don't you think that Miss Vaughan and Mrs. Trehanna might have a nice little trip to London or somewhere? Think it over, my dear sir, think it over." And he bowed himself out.

"Think it over!" quoth Michael, as the door shut. "I'll see him—"

"Barbie!" and he turned to where she sat laughing, and lifting her face from her hands to peep mischievously at him. "You put him up to this, madam! You'd better begin packing; for we start for the South on our wedding trip to-morrow, and Aunt Eliza and Miss Vaughan, and the house and the doctor, may take care of each other. You're to have a change to wholesome submission to authority, Dame Barbara."



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